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PERSONAL AND PARTY GOVERNMENT

A CHAPTER IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF
THE EARLY YEARS OF THE REIGN
OF GEORGE III, 1760—1766

BY

D. A. WINSTANLEY, M.A.

FELLOW AND LECTURER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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PREFACE

IN the following pages an attempt is made to narrate the struggle between the crown and the whig party from the accession of George III to the downfall of the first Rockingham administration. The tale is tangled and involved, and it has been necessary, in order to preserve the continuity of the story, to omit much of vital interest in the history of the time. Thus the highly important negotiations with France, and the Peace of Paris, are only considered in their bearing upon domestic politics; and although this limited treatment might well deserve censure in a work professing to be a general account of the period, it may possibly be excused in what claims to be no more than a study of only one aspect of the early years of the reign of George III.

It would be a mistake, however, to deny or belittle the importance of the contest between the king and the whig leaders. It was no mere selfish lust for power that impelled George III to wage war upon the men who had enslaved his grandfather, but a conscientious conviction that it was his duty, as a constitutional monarch, to rule as well as to reign. Nor were his opponents influenced by sordid and ignoble motives. Believing firmly in the principles of party government, Newcastle and his followers saw in the increase of the power of the crown a menace to

the safety of the nation and the predominance of parliament; and, though worsted in the encounter, and condemned to dwell, save for a brief and unhappy interval, in the wilderness of opposition, the ideals, for which they endured defeat, were destined ultimately to triumph. The defects of the whigs, and they were many, have not been spared by historians; but it is to their credit that in their struggle with the monarchy they were fighting not for places but for principles.

Their failure is somewhat surprising, seeing how much they had in their favour. It might have been anticipated that a youthful king, inexperienced in affairs, and too apt to disregard public opinion when it conflicted with his own will, would find himself no match for men who had grown grey in the service of his grandfather, and had accumulated a rich store of political experience. The success of the crown cannot be attributed to any one cause, and due account must be taken of the fact that an organised opposition to the administration was an irregular and unrecognised feature of the constitutional life of the period. But, when all reservations have been made, it remains true that Pitt, by refusing to throw in his lot with the whigs at the critical moment of their fortunes, did not a little to gain for the king the authority which he was so grossly to misuse. Great as were his achievements, and worthy as he is of the high place he holds in English history, Pitt failed as a domestic politician; and the early years of the reign of George III constitute the record of his failure.

Use has been made of the valuable Newcastle, Hardwicke, and Bute papers at the British Museum; and no student of the eighteenth century can fail to owe much to the many distinguished historians who have devoted themselves to that period. I am also deeply indebted to Dr Foakes-Jackson of Jesus college, and to Mr H. W. V. Temperley of Peterhouse, for much kind assistance. By a generous expenditure of time and trouble they were able to remove many blemishes, and suggest many improvements; and while the author is solely responsible for the many defects of his work, they have no small share in any merits which it may possess. I must also thank Dr A. W. Ward, master of Peterhouse, who was good enough to give much needed help.

D. A. W.

• *March 2, 1910.*



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CHAPTER I.

THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE III.

THE accession of George III to the English throne on October 25th, 1760, marks the beginning of an important epoch in the constitutional and political history of this country. Having but recently attained his majority when he inherited the crown, the new prince was to reign for sixty years, frequently to the detriment of the nation whose welfare, nevertheless, he sincerely had at heart. The domestic and personal misfortunes of his later life, and the courage he displayed under the burden of adversity, gained for him the affection of his subjects, causing them to forget his faults as a ruler; but those who knew him in his younger days regarded him with a less friendly and more critical eye. Lord Waldegrave, who had acted as his governor, formed an unfavourable opinion of his character, crediting him with obstinacy, uncharitableness, and a lack of frankness¹; and, unfortunately, these defects were exaggerated rather than diminished by the education he had received. For fear that he might be contaminated by the lax morality of his age, he had not been permitted to mix freely in society; and though this restriction doubtless prevented him from contracting many vicious

¹ *Waldegrave Memoirs*, pp. 8—10.

habits, it seriously restricted the limits of his mental horizon. A tendency to act upon prejudices which he mistook for principles, an inability to credit his opponents with sincerity and good faith, an inveteracy of resentment, and a blind adherence to his own opinions, however little founded on reason and knowledge, were the distinguishing characteristics of George III throughout his long reign. Sincerely and unaffectedly pious, genuinely anxious for his people's welfare, he possessed many qualities admirable and attractive in a private individual; and, even as a constitutional monarch, he might have acted a useful part in the intelligent discharge of the formal duties of his office. But, unfortunately both for himself and his country, he elected to play a more ambitious rôle, and one for which he was intellectually unfit.

The task which he set himself to perform was no less than the restoration of the personal power of the monarchy which, since the Revolution of 1688, had suffered a sensible declension. The great struggle in the seventeenth century between the crown and parliament for supremacy in the state, in the course of which one king had lost his life upon the scaffold, and another had been obliged to seek refuge in France, had ended in a victory for the popular assembly; and George III had no wish to go back upon a settlement which had been ratified by time and acquiesced in by the majority of the nation. The prerogatives, claimed and exercised by the Stuart monarchs, had perished with them; and, after the Revolution of 1688, it was impossible for an English sovereign to assert a supremacy over the law of the land or a right to rule independently of the will of parliament. Henceforth he was compelled to recognise that very definite limits had been placed to his authority; and that, if he was the leader of the nation, he was also, in a sense, its servant.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that the statesmen responsible for placing William of Orange upon the English throne intended to deprive him and his successors of all influence upon the government of the state. The political principles, which inspired the leaders of the Revolution, are embodied in the two great statutes of the period, the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, neither of which are directed towards the annihilation of the royal authority, aiming rather at the restraint of those powers which had rendered the government of the Stuarts insupportable. The law of the land was made superior to the arbitrary will of the sovereign by the abolition of the suspending and dispensing powers, and by making the tenure of the judicial office independent of the good pleasure of the crown; whilst annual sessions of parliament were rendered indispensable by the necessity of passing the Mutiny Act every year, and by the extension of the practice of appropriation of supplies. Thus the effect of the Revolution was to institute, for the first time in English history, a limited monarchy with parliament as the supreme power; but, restricted as the royal authority was, it still remained considerable. An immense amount of patronage was still vested in the king; his choice of ministers was unfettered by legal restrictions; he could dismiss parliament at pleasure, and could even refuse to sanction a measure approved by both houses. Possessed of such extensive powers, it is not surprising that neither William III nor Anne were cyphers in the politics of their time, and often exercised a decisive influence upon the course of national affairs.

The outcome of the constitutional struggle had been, therefore, not to destroy the royal prerogative, but to insure that it was used in accordance with the will of parliament. That body, as representative of the nation, was made

responsible for the proper use of the authority of the crown; but, unfortunately, nothing was done to equip it for the adequate performance of this onerous task. Those, who had reformed the monarchy, had omitted to reform the parliament. No steps had been taken to extend the franchise, to diminish the number of rotten boroughs, or to check the practice of bribery at elections. It was still possible for seats to be purchased in the open market, for two or three freeholders to return a representative, and for a member to accept a bribe at the hands of the government without being called to account by indignant constituents. It is true that parliament could control the king, but it is equally true that the king, if he chose to do so, could control parliament. In Cornwall, which returned more borough members than any other English county, and was notorious for electioneering corruption, the crown was possessed of considerable influence¹; and, in other parts of England, it was customary for certain constituencies, known as treasury boroughs, always to return the nominees of the ministry of the day. Moreover, the members of a large number of boroughs were practically appointed by private individuals or close corporations who, regarding the privilege as a species of property, were often found willing to sell their rights; and it was open to the monarch to compete with his subjects in the purchase of seats.

The defects in the electoral system were not the only means possessed by the king of influencing the body

¹ According to Coxe, Lord Falmouth, at the General Election of 1741, "gained over many of the Cornish boroughs which had usually returned the members recommended by the crown," and, apparently, in 1774, a later Lord Falmouth was able to return the members of six Cornish boroughs. See Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole* (1798), I. 684; Porritt's *The Unreformed House of Commons*, I. 340.

which had undertaken to defend the national liberty. The extensive patronage, which he still retained, enabled him to reward richly those who rendered him personal service; and members of parliament who dared to frustrate the wishes of the crown, did so with the knowledge that they were probably cutting themselves off from the valuable prizes of public life. A peerage, a public office, or a rich sinecure which would confer affluence upon the happy recipient, were among the usual rewards offered to men who were willing to sacrifice their convictions to their advancement. It has been related how, in the middle of the eighteenth century, "one nobleman had eight thousand a year in sinecures, and the colonelcies of three regiments. Another, as auditor of the exchequer, inside which he never looked, had eight thousand pounds in years of peace and twenty thousand in years of war¹." The same tale is told by Horace Walpole who enumerates with great complacency the various patent places conferred upon him by an affectionate father, and proudly asserts that "he who holds an ancient patent place enjoys it as much by law as any gentleman holds his estate, and by more ancient tenure than most gentlemen hold theirs²." When, moreover, it is remembered that the granting of offices of great profit and no obligations did not exhaust the resources of the crown, that it was still possible for valuable government contracts to be assigned as rewards for political services, and for the supporters of the ministry to be enriched at the public expense, some idea can be formed of the golden prospect which revealed itself to those who entered into

¹ Trevelyan's *The Early History of Charles James Fox* (Silver Library edition), pp. 97, 98.

² Walpole's *Works* (1798), II. 363—370. The essay is also printed in Cunningham's edition of *Walpole's Letters*, I.

politics, not with the idea of serving their country, but with the intention of founding a fortune¹.

Thus, by a wise dispensation of his patronage, by influencing elections, and corrupting the chosen of the people, it was still possible for an English king, even after the Revolution settlement, to rule in apparent submission to parliament but really in accordance with his own wishes. Able to control the guardian placed over him, he could still exercise a decisive influence over the course of politics; for a subservient house of commons, bribed and cajoled into submission, would support the ministers whom the king approved, and the royal prerogative, nominally exercised under parliamentary supervision, would, in effect, be uncontrolled. Yet nothing is more certain than that, in spite of these many advantages, the English monarchy, after the death of Queen Anne, declined in prestige and influence, and by the time that George III ascended the throne had reached the nadir of its fortunes. The new ruler discovered that his patronage was dispensed by the ministers who, as his grandfather had bitterly remarked, were indeed "kings in this country," that members of

¹ On his accession, George I was informed by Lord Cowper that "the parties are so near an equality and the generality of the world so much in love with the advantages a king of Great Britain has to bestow, without the least exceeding the bounds of law, that 'tis wholly in your Majesty's power by showing your favour in due time (before the elections) to one or other of them, to give which of them you please a clear majority in all succeeding parliaments," Cowper's *An impartial History of parties*. Thoyras Rapin in his *Dissertation sur les Whigs et les Torys* (1717) also comments upon the influence possessed by the crown: "Le premier abus consiste dans la trop grande influence que la cour a dans les élections des membres de la Chambre Basse, et par conséquent sur les délibérations du Parlement.... On peut juger de l'effet que produisent ces intrigues par cette seule considération. C'est qu'ordinairement le Parlement est Whig quand le ministère est Whig, et qu'il est Tory, quand les ministres sont Torys" (pp. 156—158).

parliament looked to the cabinet rather than to the crown for guidance, and that what may be termed the political machinery had been captured by a few men who utilised it to maintain themselves in power and to diminish the authority of the crown.

This unanticipated development had been brought about by a strange mixture of chance and design. The death of Queen Anne without issue placed in the person of George I a foreigner upon the English throne; and the monarchy could not but be affected by the change. Past fifty years of age when he inherited the royal dignity, unable to speak the language of his new subjects, and caring little for the land he had come to rule, George I was not likely to be an object of English loyalty; and, though the nation might acquiesce in the accession of the Hanoverian dynasty as a safeguard against Catholicism and the predominance of French influence in Europe, it was hardly likely to become enthusiastic at the spectacle of a German elector installed upon the throne of the Stuarts. The part played by George I in the government of the country, and especially in the sphere of foreign policy, has doubtless been unduly minimised, but it remains true that, unable to count upon the affection of his people, and unacquainted with the domestic politics and constitutional customs of his new dominions, he was obliged to entrust what came to be known as the management of the house of commons to his ministers who, in order that they should adequately accomplish this task, had to be allowed to dispose of the royal patronage. Thus what the king should have preserved in his own hands, if jealous of his prerogative, was delegated to his advisers, with the result that it was the ministers and not the crown who granted peerages, appointed to bishoprics, and filled up those numerous places of which the occupants had nothing

to do but draw their pay; and it is hardly surprising that the house of commons in time became more intent upon pleasing the king's servants than upon pleasing the king himself.

It was a further blow to the royal influence that the new dynasty was deprived, by the circumstances attending its accession, of the power of choosing its ministers indiscriminately from either political party. Unable to confide in the tories, whom he suspected of having intrigued in the interests of the banished Stuarts, George I was obliged to place his trust in the whigs who used the royal favour to establish themselves in power and to drive their political opponents into the wilderness of opposition. His example was followed by his successor; and the whig predominance, which continued until the early years of the reign of George III, is one of the most striking and significant features of the constitutional history of the eighteenth century. It now became possible for the ministry to be composed of men holding the same political opinions, and thus possessed of the strength which comes from union; and, when it is remembered that the custom of the sovereign attending the meetings of the cabinet ceased after the death of Queen Anne, it can be seen how great was the probability of a ministry, united in opinion and secure of a majority in the house of commons, taking up an independent and even hostile attitude towards the court. Thus the banishment of the tories from political life, and the transference of the crown to a foreign house, fostered the growth of an oligarchy which was to rule England until the accession of George III. A few great nobles, the leaders of the whig party, adding to the influence they possessed as borough proprietors and great landowners the vast resources of the royal patronage, effectively controlled

parliament; and the king found himself unable to dispense with their services, not because they were approved by the country, but because of their following in the house of commons. The great "Revolution families," as they came to be called, the Russells, the Cavendishes, and the Pelhams, established themselves in power by using the influence of the crown against the crown itself; and it was left for George II to discover that, in order to protect himself from the jacobites, he had sold himself into slavery to the whigs. At the end of his reign he complained with some bitterness that "he had a right to choose those who were to serve him, though at present so far from an option, he was not even allowed a negative¹." Parliament, which in former days had resisted the crown in the name of the people, now prevailed against the king in the interests of the whig aristocracy.

Victory, however, as well as defeat is apt to be a cause of division; and those, who had succeeded in bringing the monarchy into subjection, soon fell to quarrelling amongst themselves. During the last years of Queen Anne the whigs, threatened by the tory supremacy, had presented a more or less united front to the enemy; but no sooner had they prevailed over their opponents than divisions began to appear in their ranks. Sunderland and Townshend competed for the royal favour during the early part of George I's reign; and though the schism was temporarily healed by Walpole's rise to power, and the deaths of his two most formidable rivals, Sunderland and Stanhope, it was soon to break out afresh. Walpole was obliged to work with colleagues who had no intention of submitting to the dictation of a single member of the cabinet, and after his resignation in 1742, it became more apparent than ever before that the whig party was split up into

¹ *Waldegrave Memoirs*, p. 133.

rival sections, divided from each other by no question of principle but by personal predilections. While some gathered round the banner raised by the Duke of Bedford, others enlisted under the Duke of Newcastle, and the importance of a statesman was measured, not by the favour he enjoyed at court or his popularity with the country, but by the extent of his following in both houses of parliament. The importance of these divisions must not, however, be exaggerated, for though Newcastle and Bedford were in a sense rivals, they were often found willing to work together; and the whig leaders, however great their internal dissensions, were apt to unite when their authority was threatened by the crown.

The most typical, and in many ways the most successful politician of the period, was Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle. Succeeding to the barony of Pelham on the death of his father in 1712, he was created Earl of Clare in 1714; and, in the year following, received the title of Duke of Newcastle upon Tyne, as a reward for raising a troop of horse for service against the Pretender. Many years later he was given a second dukedom, that of Newcastle-under-Lyme, as a consolation for the loss of office. Possessed of great wealth, for, in addition to his paternal inheritance, he had succeeded early in life to the vast estates of his uncle, John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, he embarked upon a political career, declaring for the House of Brunswick and whig principles. Rising quickly to official importance, he became secretary of state in 1724, and continued to hold that office until the death of his brother, Henry Pelham, compelled him to exchange it for the first Lordship of the treasury, which post he occupied when George III ascended the throne. Few eighteenth century statesmen were more bitterly attacked by their contemporaries or have been more

severely judged by historians. Depicted as a treacherous buffoon, and as devoid of any ability save a capacity for low intrigue, Newcastle has been caricatured rather than portrayed by writers who never grow weary of relating his rather foolish mannerisms and his many eccentricities. Though inferior to Pitt, both as a man and a statesman, Newcastle proved himself a capable politician and an industrious administrator. He was by no means so habitually deficient in his management of foreign affairs as has been often represented; but it is unlikely that he would have risen to the eminence he attained if he had not shown himself a thoroughly efficient party manager. Throughout a lengthy political career he remained true to his belief in the principles of party government, and spared no pains to gain a following which would support him in parliament. He was not squeamish of the means he practised to obtain his end, and for him the church, the civil service, the bench, seats in parliament, honours, and titles existed largely to buy and keep adherents. But, in thus openly carrying on a crusade of corruption, he differed little from most of his contemporaries, save that he was rewarded by greater success; and if he had been more scrupulous, it is not improbable that the whig predominance would have been seriously endangered, and George III anticipated by his grandfather in the design of restoring the personal power of the crown. His devotion to party intrigue, sometimes, indeed, led him to underestimate the importance of events which fell outside that sphere of activity; but, as will be seen, he was by no means destitute of real political insight. He may be accused of having lowered the standard of public life, but it is to his credit that, in an age of greed and corruption, he was free from all reproach of desiring to make the pursuit of politics lead to the acquisition of wealth;

and, when the days of adversity came, and he was obliged to retire from office, it was found that he had very materially reduced his own fortune in the service of his party.

Newcastle's most intimate friends and political advisers were his brother, Henry Pelham, Philip Yorke, first Earl of Hardwicke, and William Cavendish, fourth Duke of Devonshire. Pelham, a dull and painstaking politician, did not survive the reign of George II, but Hardwicke was to live to see the overthrow of the once triumphant party, and to die in the hour of defeat. The son of a small attorney at Dover, he rose by sheer ability and unrelenting industry from the ranks of the middle classes to be lord chancellor of England; and, although his comparatively humble origin was never forgotten by his enemies, he was the cherished friend of Newcastle who was accustomed to ask his advice in every political crisis. In seeking counsel in this quarter Newcastle was guided by a true instinct; for, though a zealous whig and a firm believer in the principles of party government, Hardwicke was a wise statesman as well as an ardent politician, and had other interests at heart besides the triumph of the particular faction of which he was a member. In legal circles he will always be remembered as one of the greatest of equity judges; and as a minister his fame has been unjustly tarnished by the attacks directed against him on account of his association with Newcastle. He can at least never be accused of being a mere time-server, for it should be remembered in his favour that, in the face of much temptation, he remained true to the cause he had espoused when it had ceased to be profitable to do so.

The other member of this narrow circle, William Cavendish, fourth Duke of Devonshire, was a typical representative of a family which has always played an

honourable part in English history. Inheriting his political principles almost as much as his name and his estates, the Duke of Devonshire rose to high office in the state; and, although of mediocre ability, was gifted with that equable temperament which is among the inheritances of his house. A strictly honourable politician, and possessed of a fund of sound common-sense, he was universally respected and liked, even by those who were opposed to him; and was often called upon to settle differences which had arisen between men not endowed with his happy disposition.

A rival section of the whig party was led by John, Duke of Bedford, who was destined to play a leading and not always glorious part in the early years of George III's reign. With an ancestry as distinguished as the Cavendishes, Bedford's political importance was inevitable; but, though always asserting his adherence to whig principles, he refused to submit to the Pelham predominance, and formed a faction of his own, which came to be known as the "Bloomsbury gang." A proud and passionate man, prone to take offence, and jealous of his own importance, Bedford was not easy to work with; but he was by no means without political acumen; and though he supported the unpopular side in the negotiations which concluded the Seven Years' war, he was able to give a consistent defence of the policy he advocated. In an age carried away by Pitt's imperial ideals, Bedford was what would now be called a "little Englander"; and his reputation has suffered in consequence. Unfortunately, too, for his good fame, though himself a man of strict honour, his followers were some of the most abandoned politicians of the day, preferring places to principles and their own advancement to the country's welfare. During the reign of George II, Gower, Sandwich, and Rigby were the

leading members of this discredited faction; and before any negotiation with Bedford could be brought to a successful issue, it was generally found necessary to satisfy the rapacious appetites of his followers. Lord Gower was perhaps the most respectable member of the party, with the exception of its leader; but of Rigby nothing good is related save that he drank fair¹. An unblushing and unscrupulous placeman, he had no thought or care save for his own profit; and under an appearance of jollity and good-nature, concealed a heartless and cynical temperament. By callous self-seeking, and an effrontery which nothing could abash, he became of some political importance, and will always be remembered as the "brazen boatswain of the Bedford crew."

If Rigby was the most grasping, Lord Sandwich was certainly the most dissolute member of this faction. With some pretensions as a patron of art, capable of industry, and not without administrative ability, he would have been quite fitted for high political office, were it not that he shocked an easy-going age in the matter of morality by the extent and variety of his excesses. A leading member of one of the most famous Hell-Fire clubs of the period, Sandwich lived and died in defiance of public decency; and when George III appointed him to be secretary of state, men, forgetting that politicians cannot be pickers and choosers, wondered how so pious a king could select so infamous a servant.

Out of the circle of these whig politicians it was Newcastle who rose to pre-eminence in the period after the fall of Walpole. He forced George II to dismiss Carteret, the minister favoured at court, and succeeded in driving Bedford from the cabinet; and the struggle was perhaps not so ignoble as it is usually represented. Reprehensible

¹ Trevelyan's *The Early History of Charles James Fox*, p. 71.

as were the means adopted by Newcastle to gain followers, he at least prevailed by aid of a parliamentary majority, thus testifying to the real strength of a minister under a constitutional monarchy. For ten years he governed England in alliance with his brother and Hardwicke; but the death of Henry Pelham in 1754 struck a mortal blow at his power. Pelham, as first Lord of the treasury and leader of the lower house, had undertaken the management of the house of commons. It was he that had dispensed Newcastle's bribes and promises, keeping the party together and winning over waverers at critical moments; and, now that he was gone, it was difficult to find another to take his place. Newcastle, confined to the house of lords, was unable unaided to execute properly this most necessary part of his work; and there was a real danger that whoever was allowed to bribe and corrupt the members of the lower house would gain sufficient power to enable him to strike for independence. It was not until 1755 that Newcastle, driven to despair by the rising tide of opposition, entrusted the task to Henry Fox who, at the same time, was given the seals of secretary of state. Fox was not long in discovering that he had embarked upon a forlorn hope. There was every sign that the country would shortly be involved in another great continental struggle; and, though war had not yet been declared with France, hostilities between the two countries had already begun in America where an English force had been almost completely annihilated. The nation, which had always regarded Newcastle with indifference, now began to look upon him with disgust. The capture of Minorca by the French, which followed immediately upon the formal declaration of war, fanned the fury of the people against an administration apparently betraying every symptom of incompetence. The system of patronage,

so effective in the past, now broke down in the face of what threatened to be a great national catastrophe; for it was impossible that members of parliament should remain unaffected by so vigorous an outcry on the part of the country. Abandoned by Fox, who perceived the danger of being engulfed in the rising storm, Newcastle resigned office in the autumn of 1756, and was succeeded by an administration in which the Duke of Devonshire was first Lord of the treasury, and William Pitt secretary of state.

The elder Pitt was perhaps the only politician of the period who was really popular with the nation at large. The grandson of a governor of Madras who acquired notoriety by the purchase of a famous diamond, he entered parliament in 1735, quickly distinguishing himself by the perfection of his oratory and the fierceness of his onslaughts upon Walpole's administration. A member of that little band nicknamed "the Patriots," he continued to oppose, even after Walpole's fall, pouring the vials of his rhetorical wrath upon Carteret whom he denounced, in the rather florid style that he affected, as having "drunk of the potion described in poetic fictions, which made men forget their country." Much of his criticism was grossly and absurdly unfair; and in the bitterness of his language and the ferocity of his attack, he has been equalled by many a soured politician. He was, however, no needy placeman offering himself for sale, and was honourably distinguished by the pure and disinterested motives which inspired his conduct. He did not seek for office because of any emolument it might bring, nor to satisfy a craving for self-aggrandisement; but because he was convinced that he, alone, was capable of saving the country. He had many faults, and was often bombastic and overbearing; but he was possessed of all the self-assurance of true

greatness, and, in an age of few moral ideals, cherished a passionate devotion to England. All else, profit, places, even the principles of party government, seemed to him naught when weighed against the national glory; and though doubtless his excessive patriotism sometimes led him to disregard the common bonds uniting different states, and to sacrifice domestic to imperial politics, his errors were those of the intellect and not of the heart. He was sometimes mistaken, but he was never mean¹.

There hardly seemed room for such a man in the narrow field of eighteenth century politics; and it is significant that Pitt was more than twenty years in parliament before he rose to anything higher than a subordinate post in the administration. But during this period of probation he was laying the foundations of his popularity with the nation which greeted with enthusiasm a politician so different from the ordinary type. When in 1746 he accepted the office of paymaster of the forces, he astonished his contemporaries by refusing to take advantage of the valuable perquisites belonging to that post; and though a theatrical element was not absent from this act of self-denial, it was also inspired by a delicacy of feeling not often found in the political life of the time. The spectacle of a comparatively poor man declining to enrich himself at the public expense was not one to which that age was accustomed; and it is not surprising that the people began to believe that Pitt differed not only in degree but in kind from the men who surrounded him, and to regard him with a feeling akin to personal devotion. The support of the nation, however, profited little in a parliament in which the Pelhams were predominant: and though by his marriage with Lord Temple's sister Pitt

¹ For an examination of Dr von Ruville's estimate of Pitt's character, see Appendix I.

secured a certain measure of political influence, it was as nothing compared with that enjoyed by Newcastle. Disliked by George II who had neither forgotten nor forgiven his many disparaging references to Hanover, comparatively powerless in parliament, and feared by the statesmen of the period as much as he was trusted by the people, it seemed as though he was condemned to illustrate how imperfectly the house of commons represented the country.

His opportunity came when the disastrous opening of the Seven Years' war produced something approaching to a national panic, and forced Newcastle into resignation. In the administration which was formed in December, 1756, Pitt was the real leader, though Devonshire the nominal premier. After a five months term of power, however, the new ministers found that they had embarked upon a hopeless undertaking, and that it was impossible to prevail, unsupported by the crown, in a parliament still dominated by Newcastle. Popular opinion had been successful in forcing Pitt into the cabinet, but it was not able to keep him there; and he was dismissed by the king in the spring of 1757. A ministerial interregnum of eleven weeks followed. The nation expressed its approval of the fallen minister by voting him gold boxes; and, unable to construct a cabinet in which the popular statesman was not included, George II was compelled to swallow his pride and sanction the formation of an administration in which Newcastle was first lord of the treasury, and Pitt secretary of state.

This was the famous coalition ministry which raised the country to a pinnacle of glory not attained by it since the days when the victories of Marlborough forced Louis XIV to sue for peace. The Seven Years' war, which had opened so disastrously, was converted into

a series of triumphs astonishing to those who had come to believe that the sun of England's greatness had set. Canada was conquered, the French power in India overthrown, English naval supremacy asserted, and the country embarked upon a flood of success which showed no signs of abating. Pitt had succeeded in evoking a spirit of daring and enterprise which had too long lain dormant; and though some of the details of his policy may be adversely criticised, it remains true that he had taught the country the secret of its greatness. And those who had been taught were grateful for the lesson, lavishing upon Pitt a wealth of confidence denied to all his colleagues. Secure of a parliamentary majority, and overwhelmingly popular with the country, the coalition ministry has every claim to be considered one of the most powerful administrations ever formed.

Such was the political situation when George III came to the throne, determined to free the crown from its subjection to the whig party. The death of his father in 1751 had secured the predominance of the influence of his mother, the Princess Dowager, and her friend and counsellor, Lord Bute, who trained the young prince for the work they intended him to accomplish. It has been said that it was from Lord Bute that George III received his first lessons in English constitutional history¹, and it is not likely that the teacher minimised the prerogatives of an English king. The boy was not slow to learn the lesson. Knowing little of the world, surrounded by those who flattered his pride, and sincerely anxious to fulfil the duties of his responsible station, it is not improbable that, early in life, he came to regard himself as destined to overthrow those who had humiliated his grandfather. His

¹ *History of England from the accession to the decease of George III*, by John Adolphus (1840), i. 12.

inclinations did not long remain unknown, and, when George II died, it was reported that his successor, though prepared to continue the same ministers in power, was likely to retain more authority in his own hands¹.

Those responsible for the education of the young prince had taken as their gospel Bolingbroke's famous pamphlet, *The Idea of a Patriot King*. The leader of the tories at the close of Queen Anne's reign, Bolingbroke had seen all his hopes dashed to the ground by the establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty. Knowing that he would receive but little mercy at the hands of his triumphant opponents, he had fled to France, and placed himself at the disposal of the Pretender, only to find that the Stuarts in exile had lost none of their old incapacity. Abandoning the jacobite cause as hopeless, Bolingbroke obtained the royal pardon, and was permitted to return to England, though not allowed to take his seat in the house of lords. Denied his full rights as an English peer, and cherishing a deep-rooted animosity against Walpole, he waged unceasing war against the ministry with his pen. A most accomplished writer, he was possessed of all the skill of an experienced politician in seizing hold of the weak points of a strong case; and, though unable to express his opinions in parliament, was one of the most formidable antagonists of the administration, doing not a little to fan the popular dislike of Walpole. It is customary to sneer at Bolingbroke's political philosophy and to regard him as the champion of despotic ideals of government; but this is to do him a serious injustice. It is to his credit that he perceived the fatal flaws in the system of party government as it was conceived in the eighteenth century, and it was in the best known of all his works, *The Idea of*

¹ *Horace Walpole's Letters* (edited by Mrs Paget Toynbee), iv. 444—448.

a Patriot King, that he ruthlessly exposed the weak spots in the whig armour. Written in 1738, though not published till a few years later¹, few political tracts have been so bitterly attacked or so grossly misrepresented: and the version of its teaching which has obtained popular currency is more of a parody than a reproduction. With a grace of style rarely equalled and perhaps never surpassed, the author depicts with telling effect the condition to which the country had been brought by the rule of bribery and corruption. The old national spirit had been killed, and men now regarded political life either with indifference or as a happy hunting ground for competent adventurers. Sunk in a senseless apathy, the nation watched with dull eyes its representatives fight and squabble for places and emoluments; and while each man sought his own advantage, no one gave a care to the state. If ruin was to be averted, political life must be regenerated; and, according to Bolingbroke, the monarchy alone could raise England from the slough into which it had fallen. The king who undertook this task would not be compelled to ride rough-shod over the constitution, purging the evils of the body politic with the draughts of despotism. Content to restrain his authority within legal limits, he would seek to govern, not at the dictation of a faction, but in accordance with the popular will. Choosing as his ministers those whom the people approved, making war upon the parties which rent the nation with their factious strife, the patriot king would look to the country for guidance, finding his greatest happiness, not in the enjoyment of the pomp of royalty, but in the execution of the wishes of his subjects. Neither a whig nor a tory, with no interest but the country's welfare, he

¹ Bolingbroke entrusted the manuscript of the pamphlet to Pope who secretly printed fifteen hundred copies of it.

would be, in the truest sense of the word, a national monarch¹.

It is vain to deny the attractive character of the argument, and those responsible for George III's education may be excused for thinking that, in basing their instruction upon such a foundation, they were preparing their young charge to fulfil his highest duties as a constitutional king. Unfortunately, however, Bolingbroke did not explain the method to be employed by his ideal ruler to ascertain the national will; and frankly admitted that a patriot king was "the most uncommon of all phenomena in the physical or moral world." At the present time parliamentary elections form a rough but reliable index of public opinion; but this has only been brought about by the reform and extension of the franchise and the almost total abolition of electioneering bribery. In the eighteenth century neither the debates in the house of commons nor the results of elections were at all indicative of the trend of thought in the country; and it was not easy for the king, save on questions which stirred the nation to its depths, to hear the voice of his people. The monarch, therefore, who undertook the part allotted to him by Bolingbroke, would be beset with difficulties, many of which might prove insuperable. Unless gifted with a rare political insight, he might easily misread the signs of the times, and, instead of being the servant of his subjects, become the slave to his own prejudices. Not until parliament had been reformed and corruption abolished could Bolingbroke's ideal monarchy come into being; and his teaching has suffered in reputation by imperfect execution at the hands of one, not inclined to submission, and too apt to refuse advice not in accordance with his own opinions.

¹ For an interesting discussion of this pamphlet, see *Bolingbroke and his Times: The Sequel*, by Walter Sichel (1902), pp. 365—372.

George III had imbibed but part of Bolingbroke's political philosophy. He had been taught to dislike the party system, to distrust the whigs, and to despise his predecessor for the humiliation he had endured at the hands of his ministers; but it is very doubtful whether he had learned to submit himself to the dictates of his subjects. He intended to inaugurate a new epoch in the relations between the crown and the cabinet, to wrest from his ministers the power which they had stolen from the monarchy, and, without transcending the limits of his prerogative, to exercise a decisive influence over the national destinies. It was no easy task that he had set himself to perform. If Newcastle had stood alone, the cry of oligarchical usurpation might have been raised, and an appeal made to the country against an unrepresentative house of commons. If Pitt had stood alone, he might have been attacked in parliament, and advantage taken of the fact that he had but a scanty personal following, and looked to the nation rather than its representatives for his strength. But the union of parliamentary influence with popular support boded ill for the designs of the crown; and the coalition ministry seemed destined to withstand all the assaults which might be levied against it.

Yet the enterprise was not so hopeless as it seemed at the first glance. Newcastle and Pitt were men of such different and opposite characteristics that it was not easy for them to work in harmony. Their alliance had been of the nature of a marriage of convenience, and, like many such an union, had been productive of friction. To those thrown into close contact with him, Pitt's faults were sometimes more obvious than his many virtues. He was often bombastic and unreasonable, and never hesitated to show his contempt for men whom he thought deserved it. He

always preferred to dictate rather than explain; and many of his schemes appeared wild and visionary to more prosaic minds. Newcastle, who was of a jealous temperament, and had grown accustomed to predominance in the ministry, fretted under the pre-eminence of his great colleague, and on certain questions, moreover, fundamentally disagreed with him. Whereas Pitt desired to continue the war until France agreed to terms which ensured the supremacy of England, Newcastle sighed for a speedy peace. Pitt was anxious for, and Newcastle was opposed to the meditated attack upon Belleisle; and they were not in agreement over the Militia Bill, Newcastle's resistance to that measure being strengthened by the support of George II who, only a few days before his death, had reproached him when he confessed his inability to secure its rejection¹. Thus the ground was prepared for the attack. To accentuate the strained relations between the two leading members of the administration, to foment their jealousies, and, after driving them apart, to crush them separately, was the obvious course for George III to follow. It is impossible to prove that he deliberately pursued this policy²; but it is certain that during the first year of the new reign there was a marked increase in the lack of harmony between Pitt and Newcastle, and that the latter was willing to lean upon the court for protection against a colleague who seemed prepared to take all power into his own hands.

It would not be enough, however, to drive the two leaders of the coalition further apart: steps must also be

¹ Add. MS. 32913, f. 45, f. 183, f. 226.

² According to the second Lord Hardwicke, the King "principally availed himself with great wit and finesse of the dissensions between the Duke of Newcastle and Mr Pitt; that he played off one against the other occasionally, till he got rid of the popular minister" (*Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham*, by Lord Albemarle, 1852, i. 6).

taken to undermine the parliamentary power of the whig party. Newcastle's hold over the house of commons was the fruit of bribery and corruption. He had trafficked in boroughs like a huckster¹, and had dispensed the patronage of the crown to reward his followers and purchase new adherents. Preferments in church and state had been bestowed with a lavish hand upon those who had earned recognition by faithful service to the ministry. Seats in parliament had been bought and sold, and by devoting himself to the work of corruption with an enthusiasm worthy of a better cause, Newcastle had built up a party which might be hated but could not be despised. Pitt, in spite of his popularity with the country, had not been able to maintain himself in power, save by an alliance with the man who had captured the political machinery; and the great whig chieftain, secure of a following in the house of commons, might well prove a match for a youthful and inexperienced king.

Two courses were open to George III if he wished to strike at the root of Newcastle's predominance. Playing the part allotted to him by Bolingbroke, he might appeal to the nation against a corrupt house of commons. He might raise the standard of purity of election and initiate a movement for parliamentary reform. If bribery were discountenanced and rotten boroughs destroyed, Newcastle's power would crumble away, for if the nation were allowed to speak, it would not be in his favour. But though Newcastle might be overthrown, it was not likely that the king would profit by his fall. An appeal to the country would almost certainly result in an accession of

¹ Mr Basil Williams' article, entitled "The Duke of Newcastle and the Election of 1734," published in the *English Historical Review*, xii., throws an interesting and valuable light upon Newcastle's electioneering methods.

strength to Pitt; and the king might discover that he had only substituted one master for another. Moreover, those who wear crowns are seldom revolutionaries, and a reformation of a franchise would mean a veritable revolution of the constitution. An easier, if less honourable, path lay before George III. He could fight Newcastle with his own weapons. The latter had built up his power partly by the use of the patronage of the crown, and it was open to the new king to deprive him of that source of strength. If George III took into his own hands the dispensation of the royal patronage, it would be easy for him to win supporters in the house of commons, and undermine Newcastle's power. Owners of boroughs and members of parliament would quickly learn that obedience to the court rather than to the minister was the sure road to promotion; and few would hesitate to serve one who could reward them so richly for their devotion. If he had adopted the more difficult course, George III might have earned a different reputation in history, and acquired the glory given to those who fail in a noble cause; but he was not the man to tread a path bestrewn with obstacles and leading to an unknown destination. He preferred to use the simpler means which lay ready to his hand, and follow the well established precedents of bribery and corruption. The whigs could scarcely complain if the king was prepared to use their weapons against themselves, though they might be mortified at finding how aptly the young sovereign had learned their methods of government¹.

¹ It should be noted, however, that George III never conceived himself as destroying or deflecting the course of the constitution. He sincerely believed that the king governed as well as reigned, and was entitled to use the prerogative granted to the crown by law. He never allowed that he was obliged to choose his ministers at the dictation

Behind the parliament lay the nation, and the crown could not afford to neglect altogether the force of public opinion. The voice of the people was sometimes heard and occasionally exercised an influence over the actions of ministers. Walpole had withdrawn the Excise Bill on account of the popular feeling against it, and this is not the only instance of the power of the people. The same minister had declared war on Spain in response to popular pressure, and the directors of the South Sea company were sacrificed to appease the indignation of the country. Only a few years before the accession of George III, an enlightened measure of toleration, the Jew Naturalization Act, had been repealed because of the outcry raised against it. It was said, with some plausibility, that Pitt had climbed into office on the shoulders of the people; and there was no doubt that it would be a material advantage to the king in his contest with Newcastle and his followers if he could count upon the approval of the majority of his subjects. If George III provoked an angry feeling of resentment in the country, those whose supremacy he designed to overthrow might become endeared to the people; and it therefore behoved him to walk warily. It is true that much might be forgiven him if he were personally popular, and it has often been assumed that in the early days of his reign he possessed the affection of his subjects. This, however, seems to be open to doubt. It is certain that he had many advantages denied to his grandfather. His youth, his domestic virtues, and his simplicity of character were all in his of parliament or the nation. On March 22nd, 1778, he wrote to Lord North "I wrote on that day unto you; I again repeat it—strengthen this administration by an accession from any quarter, but I will never consent to removing the members of the present cabinet from my service." *Correspondence of King George III with Lord North*, 1867, II. 159.

favour; and, as the first of his line who was thoroughly English in his tastes and habits, he was likely to become a favourite with a race which has always been characterised by an aversion to foreigners. Many of those who went to court to pay their respects to the new king were gratified by his gracious conduct and unaffected manners¹, and compared him favourably with his predecessor who had always preferred Hanover to England, and had been too honest or too indifferent to conceal his preference. Yet the gratification expressed by a few courtiers must not be taken as representative of the feeling of the nation; and the outburst of loyalty, which usually greets the accession of a new king, is of small political significance. Lord Holland, who was a shrewd judge of men and affairs, was of the opinion that George III was never popular²: and this judgment appears less surprising when it is remembered that the two persons most closely associated with the young king were his mother, the Princess Dowager, and her adviser, Lord Bute. The former was generally supposed to have become Bute's mistress, and though the scandal may have been a malicious lie, it was very generally believed, and wrought much harm³. The moral failings of great personages are apt to be condoned, but those who credited the rumour, though they might have forgiven the princess for her want of restraint, found it hard to pardon her for her lack of taste. Her offence was that she had chosen a Scotchman for her paramour. The natives of North Britain are not, and never have been popular in England;

¹ *Walpole's Letters* (edited by Mrs Paget Toynbee), iv. 454—457.

² *The Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox* (1902), i. 76.

³ It is interesting to note that Lord Waldegrave apparently believed that a closer tie than friendship united the Princess of Wales with Lord Bute (*Waldegrave's Memoirs*, pp. 38, 39).

and in the eighteenth century they were heartily and generally detested and despised. Johnson and Wilkes, though they had little else in common, agreed in hating the Scotch; and it was unfortunate for the king that his mother's friend and his own counsellor belonged to that much abused nation. It was believed that Bute would lavish the royal bounty upon his fellow-countrymen, and that Scotchmen would flock to the court of St James to fill their pockets at the expense of Englishmen. Bute from the very beginning was unpopular; and it is by no means improbable that his master was included in the same condemnation.

It would seem likely, therefore, that Lord Holland was substantially correct in his opinion, and the king, though he might attain popularity, could not count upon it as an initial advantage. He would be obliged to enter upon his design of regaining the authority which his predecessor had lost, without the support of the people; and he would be wise to avoid a contest on questions which might affect the interests or arouse the passions of the nation. Unfortunately, this was impossible. Before he could hope to attain success, it was necessary that England should withdraw from the contest in which she was engaged. As long as the country was involved in war, Pitt seemed indispensable. The success which had attended the English arms was almost exclusively attributed to him, and great would be the outcry if he retired from the cabinet before peace was made¹. The king, however, did not wish to have a servant who could not be dismissed with impunity; and, therefore, both he and Bute were

¹ In August, 1761, Bussy informed Choiseul that Pitt was "L'idole du peuple, qui le regarde comme le seul auteur de ses succès et qui n'a pas la même confiance dans les autres membres du Conseil." See *Le Duc de Choiseul et l'Angleterre, Revue Historique*, LXXI.

anxious for the conclusion of peace, in order that they might gain greater freedom of action. They were confronted by a problem which called for delicate handling, and which could not be treated without arousing the interest of the nation. To conclude the war without gaining substantial advantages would cast opprobrium on those who thwarted the designs of a great statesman, and neglected to profit by what had been so laboriously achieved. To refuse to make peace, except on terms which the people would regard as satisfactory, might indefinitely prolong the struggle, and defer the time when Pitt's services ceased to be necessary. The riddle was by no means easy, and the attempt that was made to solve it will be dealt with in a later chapter. It is well, however, to bear in mind that, from the outset, George III was forced to enter upon a struggle with his ministry on a question not of parliamentary but of national interest: before Pitt and Newcastle could be taught that they no longer held office independently of the goodwill of the crown, it was necessary that peace should be made with France.

Some time, however, must be allowed to elapse before even this preliminary step was taken. The death of George II rendered necessary the dissolution of parliament, and negotiations for peace could not be begun until after the general election. Moreover, so much turned upon the success of these negotiations which would be conducted by the cabinet, that it was advisable to make changes in the administration, and introduce those who would be likely to work in the King's interests. Thus the first six months of the new reign were largely occupied by the general election and the ministerial changes. The latter were by no means unimportant. Henley, the lord keeper, was promoted to be lord chancellor early in 1761, and Bute declared that Henley owed his elevation

to him¹. The new chancellor was likely to prove ready to comply with the wishes of the king. Educated at Oxford, he did not, to use the phrase of one of his biographers, "altogether neglect classical learning"; but he chiefly occupied himself in cultivating a taste for port, and laying the foundations of a collection of tales more amusing than edifying. He was rewarded for these accomplishments by being elected a fellow of All Souls². In politics he had attached himself to the Leicester House party; and his promotion to the chancellorship was not, therefore, without significance. He was to prove himself a subservient instrument of the court, untrammelled by political principles, and ready to betray and desert his colleagues at the bidding of the king.

George Grenville, who held the post of treasurer of the navy, was given the rank of cabinet councillor; and though this was a position rather of dignity than of power, and did not carry with it the right of attending the meetings of the smaller or inner cabinet³, it was specially arranged that Grenville should be informed of all important business by Bute's secretary, Jenkinson⁴. Grenville, though connected by marriage with Pitt, was not in entire sympathy with him, and had openly opposed him in parliament in December, 1760⁵; and it is possible that his promotion was not entirely unconnected with this incident. Legge, the chancellor of the exchequer, whom the king disliked and treated with marked cold-

¹ *Dodington's Diary* (1784), p. 428.

² Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, v. 177. It is reported that when George III said to Henley "Your friends tell me, my lord, that you like a glass of wine," the latter replied, "They have misinformed your majesty: they should have said a bottle."

³ *English Historical Review*, xvii. 680.

⁴ *Grenville Papers* (1852), i. 360, 361.

⁵ Add. MS. 35352, f. 157.

ness¹, was dismissed from his office in spite of Newcastle's plea that he might be retained². His place was taken by Lord Barrington, a politician of slender abilities and a sincere believer in the doctrine that support should always be given to the ministers approved by the king, irrespective of the party to which they belonged³. To become chancellor of the exchequer, Barrington resigned his office of secretary at war in favour of Charles Townshend, a brilliant and erratic politician who was known to be ambitious, and was suspected of an inclination to oppose Newcastle⁴.

It would be easy to lay too great a stress upon the changes thus made. Legge fell, not because he was politically dangerous, but because in the past he had offended the king and Bute in the matter of an election. The promotion of Henley might have been expected and could hardly be criticised; and if Barrington was prejudiced in favour of the royal prerogative, he was also closely connected with Newcastle. What had been done was rather indicative of the new influences at work than productive of great results, and pales in importance before the introduction of Bute into the cabinet. The king's favourite did not belong to that ring of noblemen amongst whom the prizes of political life were usually shared. During the reign of George II he had confined himself to the politics of Leicester House, and was little known outside that narrow circle. He had never displayed any great political ability, and was generally

¹ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, I. 7.

² Add. MS. 32919, f. 402.

³ Lecky's *History of England in the eighteenth century* (Cabinet Edition), III. 188.

⁴ "That gentleman is a person of great wit and understanding, but very pushing, and has often thwarted the Duke of Newcastle in his measures." P.R.O., *Foreign State Papers Miscell.*, March 10th, 1761.

considered to be more suited for an office of ceremony than of business. Nervously sensitive as to his own dignity, chilly in manner, and excessively haughty, he was not likely to win adherents, and only too likely to make enemies. His talents did not lie in the direction of public life, and, realising his own limitations, he preferred to be the prompter in the wings rather than the actor on the stage. Bute was not of the order of royal favourites who exploit the crown to promote their own advancement. On the contrary, it seems that not selfish ambition but genuine affection for the king's person led him to take his place in the political arena; and, though he may have been unwise, he was not base. He displayed an unfeigned reluctance to assume the cares of administration, but he had to struggle against a will stronger than his own. His pupil and master had determined that he should have high office in the ministry, and that men should learn that there were other avenues to greatness than the favour of the whig party. On the day that he succeeded to the throne, the king pressed Bute to become secretary of state¹. The offer was wisely refused, but two days later Bute took his seat at the privy council, and before a month had elapsed had joined the cabinet as groom of the stole².

In normal circumstances a groom of the stole would have little weight in the cabinet council. Only summoned to meetings of the larger cabinet, which were for the most part formal in their character, he could not claim to attend those smaller meetings, sometimes called conciliabula, at which the most important

¹ Add. MS. 32919, f. 481.

² *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, i. 12, 13. Hunt's *History of England, 1760—1801* (Vol. x. of *Political History of England*, 12 volumes), p. 8: *E.H.R.* xvii. 681.

business was discussed. Yet it is likely that Bute, transcending the limits of his office, was a member of the inner cabinet. He was known to be in the most intimate confidence of the king, and it was hardly possible that he should be kept in ignorance of the most urgent affairs of state¹. Lord Holland states that Bute was present at a meeting of the smaller cabinet in November, 1760². "I suppose," said Bute himself to Lord Temple, "your Lordship does not mean to look upon me as a bare groom of the stole. The king will have it otherwise³." It would seem, therefore, that, from the very outset, Bute commanded an exceptional position, and, though holding an office of little political importance, ranked with those who were entrusted with the most intimate secrets of government. He was the king's minister in the narrowest sense of that term, and those who denied him their confidence did so at their peril. He possessed the substance without the form of power.

It may well cause surprise that Bute consented to leave a post of so much advantage to undertake the work of a secretary of state. The more important office would bring with it increased responsibilities and more arduous duties. As secretary of state he would be far more open to parliamentary and popular criticism. The circle of his enemies would be widened by his advancement to so eminent a position, and his authority would not be extended in proportion. In after years he always affirmed that it was against his own will, and in obedience to the wishes of the king, that he took the higher office; and

¹ Bute's exceptional position may be estimated from the fact that it was he who, early in the reign, offered the presidency of the council to Lord Hardwicke (Add. MS. 35428, f. 1).

² *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, i. 12, 13.

³ Add. MS. 32919, f. 285.

there is no reason to doubt the truth of this statement. Unused to business, and aware of his own unpopularity, he might well hesitate to become a colleague of Pitt¹. The burdens of office would weigh doubly heavy on one unaccustomed to the transaction of affairs; and yet there can be little doubt that the king was right in pressing his favourite to undertake the duties from which he shrank². If the royal designs were to be executed successfully, it was necessary that Bute should hold high office in the administration. Those in the cabinet might understand the position of a groom of the stole enjoying the intimate confidence of the crown; but if the ministry continued much as it had been at the close of the late reign, members of parliament and proprietors of boroughs would still regard Pitt and Newcastle as the leaders in the political world, and act accordingly. The promotion of Bute was to be the outward and visible sign of the restoration of the royal authority; and, in order that men might understand the change that had taken place, the form and substance of power must be united.

Yet, necessary as it might be, it was a step of no little daring. Pitt would certainly be offended, and if the ministers had united in opposition to the intruder, the king might have received a mortifying defeat. But what might have failed, if attempted to be brought about by the undisguised exercise of the royal authority, could

¹ On the day that George II died, Pitt informed Bute that it was not for the good of the country that he should be given high political office (*Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 149, 150).

² On March 24th, 1761, Bute wrote to the King "I take the office that of all others my mind has the most repugnance to, and I am torn from one that I have reason to dote on...Each fond wish of my heart crys out against this important change, but duty and gratitude condemns one to the trial. I make it then, but not without violent emotions and unpleasant forebodings." Add. MS. 36797, f. 47.

be effected by intrigue. Newcastle and Pitt had not drawn nearer together in face of the common danger, and the former might be willing to receive an ally against his dictatorial colleague. He was selected to play the part of a traitor within the camp, and fell into the trap which had been so carefully laid for him. It was early in 1761 that the intrigue began which resulted in Bute becoming secretary of state. The Comte de Viry, the Sardinian ambassador, acted as intermediary between Bute and Newcastle; and the latter was won over to give his consent to the proposed change. Devonshire and Hardwicke, Newcastle's staunch political allies, were taken into the secret, and agreed to accede to the king's wishes. As it was known that Pitt would object, he was not told until his opposition would have been useless. The plot was crowned with success, and within six months of his accession the king had scored a notable triumph, and laid a firm foundation for future aggressions¹.

More than a year later Newcastle was repenting of his duplicity. To his partner in crime, the Duke of Devonshire, he wrote: "I own, I did, in council with your Grace and my friends, prefer my Lord Bute to him (Pitt), and was an insignificant instrument to bring my Lord Bute into the secretary's office²." Yet, shortsighted and foolish as his conduct may have been, it is not incapable of explanation. He had suffered much at the hands of Pitt who had often treated his colleagues as subordinates, and refused to listen to their advice. He suspected that Pitt would rather prolong the war than conclude a treaty which he considered unfavourable; and, anxious for peace, Newcastle was willing to lean for

¹ For a detailed account of this intrigue, see *E. H. R.*, xvii. 683—685.

² Add. MS. 32941, f. 36.

assistance upon the king's favourite. He believed, though wrongly, that he had strengthened his position in the administration, and gratified the crown. "Lord Bute's system," he wrote about this time, "is certainly founded upon the firmest confidence in us"¹; and he was assured by Viry that Bute was anxious to bring about peace². By adroit diplomacy the king had accomplished what might have seemed impossible. He had secured a party in the administration for the favourite, and had succeeded in hoodwinking Newcastle whose present fears made him blind to future possibilities.

Thus, by the end of March, 1761, the ministry had suffered an important transformation. Bute had been given a commanding position in the official world, and the breach between Newcastle and Pitt had been widened. Moreover, during the same period, parliament had been dissolved, and a general election held. The election of a new parliament was of great importance at this particular juncture. In previous elections Newcastle had been permitted to traffic in boroughs and to use the influence of the crown to purchase adherents for himself. If he were still allowed a free hand in this nefarious business, the results would be the same as they had been in the past. A majority of those returned would be inclined to support the ministers against the king; and the latter might find that his advisers were able to appeal to parliament against the crown. It was necessary, therefore, that Newcastle should learn that the old order had passed away with the old king. In December, 1760, instructions went forth from the court that no money was to be given for the purchase of seats³; and Lord Anson was commanded by the king to inform the workmen in the royal dock-

¹ Add. MS. 32920, f. 61.

² *Ibid.* f. 158.

³ Add. MS. 32915, f. 332.

yards that they might vote for whom they pleased, even though the chancellor of the exchequer was a candidate. The grant of such exceptional freedom was probably dictated by a desire to prevent the election of Legge, and cannot be taken as indicative of the general policy followed. On the contrary, Bute declared that while the king intended to nominate the members for the royal boroughs, Newcastle must be allowed to use the crown influence arising from the customs and the excise¹. But such influence would only be available in certain places: elsewhere, Newcastle, unable to depend upon financial assistance from the crown, would be fighting at a disadvantage. It has been said that Bute privately used the king's money to influence elections²; but whether he was guilty of this breach of faith or not, Newcastle would be handicapped in the purchase of seats. Previous elections had constituted a serious drain upon his own financial resources, and he now found himself engaged in a struggle with opponents more wealthy than himself. He would have to encounter the rivalry of men, enriched with the plunder of the East, anxious to get into parliament, and careless of the means they adopted to attain their end. Borough proprietors reaped a golden harvest, and, though the court had pretended to discountenance bribery, the general election was frankly and openly corrupt. In an access of cynicism the borough of Sudbury advertised itself for sale, and the keenness of the competition can be estimated from the fact that at Andover there were no less than nine candidates³.

¹ *Dodington's Diary*, p. 433.

² *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, I. 41; *Walpole's Memoirs of the reign of George the Third* (edited by G. F. Russell Barker, 1894), I. 31.

³ *Walpole's Memoirs*, I. 31.

Nor was it lack of funds alone that stood in Newcastle's way. In previous elections men who placed their boroughs at his disposal might hope to obtain some reward at the hands of the crown; but this was no longer the case, and Newcastle was unable to guarantee that those who served him would be rewarded by the king for their fidelity. Times had changed, and those who controlled elections might prefer to exercise their influence in favour of the king rather than of his ministers. Politicians, like other men, are apt to turn from the setting to the rising sun, and Newcastle was to learn that the support of the court in the past had been of greater value than he, perhaps, realised. When he appealed to Bubb Dodington for his interest in the Weymouth election, the answer was returned that Dodington had promised to use his influence in favour of those who would certainly be approved by Newcastle because they were agreeable to the king¹. Formerly the order had been reversed, and men had been approved by the king because they were supported by the minister.

Yet, in spite of the disabilities against which he struggled, Newcastle believed that he had succeeded. He reckoned upon two hundred and ninety-two supporters and one hundred and eight opponents in the new parliament, and professed himself uncertain as to the conduct of one hundred and thirteen members². Thus, if even all those whom he doubted joined the ranks of the opposition, Newcastle would have a clear majority; and if his estimate

¹ *Dodington's Diary*, pp. 415, 416.

² Add. MS. 32999, f. 323. This document is undated, but its reference to the parliament of 1761 is proved by the inclusion of the Marquis of Tavistock amongst the members of the house of commons. The parliament of 1761 was the first and only one in which he sat. It is interesting to note that Newcastle included William Pitt amongst those members whose conduct he regarded as uncertain.

had been correct, he could have afforded to disregard the hostility of the court. Events were to prove him guilty of a gross error of judgment. The parliament, which he had thus classified, was to see him fall from office unmoved, was to approve the Peace of Paris which he condemned, and was to defend George Grenville against the attacks of the whig opposition. It was to degenerate into a tool of the court, and to be used to thwart those who dared to oppose the wishes of the king. Newcastle, in believing that if he had not gained a triumph he had at least averted a defeat in the general election, misunderstood the political situation; and it is necessary to understand how he came to be guilty of so faulty a forecast.

It was noticed by contemporaries that the new parliament contained an unusual number of members who had never sat before¹. Many of these novices probably belonged to that class which had enriched itself in India, and was anxious to play a part in political life in England. Unattached to any political party, possibly devoid of any political principles save those which they had picked up during their sojourn in the East, they would be willing to tread the path which led to honours if not to honour. Removed beyond the need of money, they would be more likely to be influenced by the smiles of a king than the guineas of a minister. Covetous of the prizes which the crown could confer, they would not be inclined to support Newcastle against the court, and the king could count upon their aid when he wished to overthrow his ministers. Moreover, Newcastle was to discover that those who had served him loyally in the past, when he had been the dispenser of patronage, were ready

¹ P. R. O., *Foreign State Papers Miscell.*, March 10th, 1761; Horace Walpole's *Letters*, v. 28, 30.

to desert him when he could no longer reward them for their devotion. The greedy crew of placemen, uninfluenced by sentimental attachment or considerations of loyalty, abandoned their old leader when he was unable to satisfy their appetites. They rallied to the banner of the court; and Newcastle, deprived of the great part of the patronage which he had formerly dispensed, found his own weapon turned against himself. By the general election of 1761 the king had gained a parliament which could be bought.

Other signs that a new order of things had arisen had not been wanting. The king's speech at the first privy council meeting of the reign was probably composed by Lord Bute, and was in any case not the work of his ministers¹. In its original form it contained a reflection upon the war, describing it as "bloody and expensive"; but before it was printed the objectionable words were deleted. The speech from the throne at the opening of parliament was drafted by Lord Hardwicke, and submitted to Bute who returned it with an addition in the king's own hand, emphasising the English birth and education of the new sovereign². Newcastle also received a disagreeable if salutary lesson in the disposal of patronage. On his own initiative the king added five tory lords and commoners to the lords and grooms of the bedchamber, leaving Newcastle to discover what had been done as best he might³. Nor was this the only

¹ FitzMaurice's *Life of Shelburne* (1878), I. 43. Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 7, 8. *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 8—11. *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, I. 5, 6.

² Add. MS. 32914, f. 345.

³ Add. MS. 32915, f. 332: "a most extraordinary phaenomenon," wrote Newcastle, "appeared yesterday, of which I had the first notice by an accidental information from Ned Finch at my Lady Yarmouth's." *Ibid.*

rebuff that the old duke suffered. He had often cause to complain of the chilly treatment he received at court; and, to one so chagrined, it was scanty comfort to be told that "the king would have everything go on for the present as it was in his grandfather's time, and 'til the several officers are appointed after the expiration of the six months; but when the new appointments are made, the king will then declare whom he will call to his cabinet council¹." It is little wonder that the old statesman felt the ground slipping from under his feet. He lived in fear that Pitt, whom he did not trust, might ally himself with Bute², and his suspicions, baseless though they were, influenced him to welcome with alacrity the advances of the king's favourite.

The time had now come to begin the negotiations for peace. Not until England had withdrawn from the European conflict could the king exercise a free choice as to those who were to serve him. It was not so much that he desired to rid himself of Pitt, but that he wished to have liberty to do so if he chose. No servant of the crown must claim to be indispensable, and peace was necessary in order that Pitt should learn that he held office by the goodwill of the court.

¹ Add. MS. 32914, f. 171.

² When it was announced that no money were to be given by the crown for the purchase of seats, Newcastle believed that he detected a consequence of an alliance between Bute and Pitt. Add. MS. 32915, f. 332.

CHAPTER II.

THE FALL OF PITT.

THE unsuccessful negotiations for peace with France, begun in March and broken off in the following September, exercised a decisive influence upon English politics by bringing about the fall of Pitt. The fact that they proved in the end abortive must not lead to the supposition that they were necessarily ill-judged or premature. Public opinion was certainly in favour of a pacification on terms justified by the recent glorious successes of the English arms, as the strain of the lengthy and exhausting contest was beginning to show itself in the fall in British securities, and the general disinclination on the part of capitalists to invest their money¹. The Bavarian minister at the English court believed that the desire for peace was very general throughout the country², and the instant rise of the funds at the first rumours of negotiations with France³ is evidence that the commercial community, which had suffered severely at the hands of French privateers⁴, was desirous of pursuing its avocations unmolested.

Yet, though the majority of Englishmen may have wished for a peace, there were few who did not desire it to be such as would secure the unchallenged supremacy of England. Many lives had been lost and much ex-

¹ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, i. 41; P. R. O., *Foreign State Papers Miscell.*, Jan. 9th, 1761.

² P. R. O., *Foreign State Papers Miscell.*, Jan. 9th, 1761.

³ P. R. O., *Foreign State Papers Miscell.*, March 17th, 1761.

⁴ *Hunt's Political History of England*, 1760—1801, p. 2.

penditure incurred in the pursuit of victory. The national enemy had been overthrown in the New World and humiliated in India; and it was felt that substantial advantages must be gained in return for so extravagant an outlay and so distinguished a success. France appeared to have reached the nadir of her fortunes; and, though an insignificant minority may have considered any peace, however unfavourable to England, preferable to the prolongation of the war, public opinion generally desired that terms should be exacted which should make the conclusion of the contest, not only advantageous to England, but disastrous to France.

Whether the war, however, was brought to an end depended far more on the king and his ministers than on the wishes of the nation at large, and the ministry was not agreed as to terms. Some like Bedford were willing to make any concessions in favour of peace. Newcastle, Hardwicke, and Devonshire were against the continuance of the war, and feared that Pitt would insist on such onerous terms that France, exhausted as she was, would prefer to continue an apparently hopeless struggle rather than conclude a peace fraught with ruin and dishonour. Their alarm, to a certain degree, was unfounded. Pitt was no Attila, intent upon rapine and slaughter. He had no wish needlessly to prolong the war; but, though ready to make peace, intended it to be of such a character as would cause it to rank amongst the most glorious in English history. He made no secret of the terms which he would expect France to accept¹. Canada, with its islands, its harbours, and its fisheries, must be surrendered to England, and the fishing privileges off the island of Newfoundland, which had been allowed to the French by the treaty of Utrecht, must be given up. Favourable as the war

¹ Add. MS. 32921, f. 340, f. 381.

had been to England, it cannot be said that these demands erred on the side of moderation. If fulfilled, the French fisheries in the New World would be entirely destroyed, and a valuable training ground for the French navy lost. The English would be left supreme in North America, and it was only too likely that the hostility of other countries, and especially Spain, would be aroused by the spectacle of so unrivalled a predominance¹.

If Pitt was not unreasonable, he may at least be said to have been exacting. He was anxious that France should pay the uttermost farthing; but it was by no means certain that that country was in so reduced a condition as to agree to any terms that might be demanded. There was a danger that the negotiations might be abruptly broken off. It was not probable that Newcastle and his friends would be able to prevail against a statesman of the type of Pitt. Animated by the confidence born of success, realising to the full that his services were indispensable, they felt that he would, if thwarted, resign the helm, and leave his colleagues the task of carrying on the war which he, alone, was capable of conducting. Newcastle understood the need of some potent ally to aid in overthrowing the supremacy of one accustomed to dominate the ministry and to exact submission to his will; and his hopes, and those of his followers, naturally rested upon the king and Lord Bute. The latter had promised to assist Newcastle in the question of peace, and, with Bute as an ally, the old duke might hope to stand his ground against his overbearing colleague. Promises,

¹ Add. MS. 32921, f. 381: "But at the end he raised the point of the fishery,...on which he had much set his heart. I spoke to him very fairly on that subject, that I wished it as much as he; but Spain and all the rest of Europe would be against our engrossing such a monopoly." Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 6th, 1761. *Ibid.* f. 340.

however, are easy to make and difficult to fulfil; and Bute was not so chivalrous as to ruin himself for the sake of a pledge he had given. His position, and that of the king, was one of no little difficulty. He was anxious that war should cease, in order that his master might reap all the benefits of the popularity of having inaugurated his reign by conferring the blessings of peace upon a nation wearied by a long struggle; and also might be able, whenever he felt it necessary, to dispense with the services of Pitt. For these reasons Bute naturally inclined to lend his support to Newcastle; but there was another side to the picture. Pitt was the popular hero, the statesman trusted by the people. He was known to have no attachment, save to the country to which he had devoted himself. In his hatred and dread of France he was supported by the majority of his fellow-countrymen who approved of his attempt to extract the most favourable terms from the enemy of England. If Bute lent his name and assistance to those endeavouring to thwart the popular minister in so beneficent a design, he would become more detestable to the people than ever; and the king, his master, might have to share in the unpopularity of his servant. The new secretary of state found himself at the beginning of his official career between the horns of a dilemma. The part he had to play was mapped out for him by circumstances. He must hold the balance between the two factions in the administration. He could not afford to throw in his lot unreservedly with the party opposed to a continuance of the war, nor could he purchase popularity by a whole-hearted alliance with Pitt. He was obliged to steer a middle course, and to aim at bringing about a peace which would satisfy the national ambition and yet be acceptable to France. It was no easy rôle that Bute was forced to adopt, calling for

greater insight and political ability than he probably possessed¹.

Before it is possible to estimate the probability of a settlement being concluded between England and France, some account must be taken of the forces at work in the latter country. There is reason to believe that Choiseul, the French minister, was sincerely desirous of bringing the war to an end. His country had suffered much in the conflict with England; and was not in a condition indefinitely to prolong hostilities. In striving, however, to attain this goal, Choiseul would have to face, not only the opposition of his ally, Austria, but also a powerful faction in France itself, pledged to the support of Austrian interests, and anxious to continue the war². The existence of this party could not but exercise an influence on Choiseul's policy. However anxious he might be to free his country from the strain of a long and unsuccessful contest, he was obliged to face the fact that there were those who were ready to accuse him of a too ready compliance with the demands of England. The cry that France was being sacrificed to the implacable hatred of her ancient enemy would be easily raised and with difficulty refuted; and it would seem that there was a very definite limit of concessions beyond which Choiseul could not afford to go. Peace would only be attained if this limit coincided with what the English ministers were willing to accept.

Spain, which had certain rights in dispute with England, and had found in Pitt a minister whom it was impossible to cajole or intimidate, had an immediate interest in the negotiations pending with France. The unbending attitude adopted by the English minister would tend to be

¹ Von Ruville's *Graf von Chatham*, II. 425.

² P. R. O., *Foreign State Papers Miscell.*, Jan. 13th, 1761.

intensified rather than diminished if he succeeded in making peace on his own terms; and Spain might be called upon, either to forego what she thought to be legitimately her due, or embark single-handed upon a struggle with a country which had astonished the world by its victories. It was therefore to her interest to secure an alliance with France. It was probable that her grievances would be listened to with more attention by the English ministers if they knew that France was ready to take up arms on her behalf. But the hope of such an alliance would be dashed to the ground by the conclusion of peace. Having come to terms with her rival, France would certainly not be willing to risk another quarrel; and Spain would be left to fight her own battles unassisted. If France was to be won to espouse the Spanish cause, it must be before peace was concluded with England¹. If he found the English administration unbending and exacting in its demands, Choiseul might be inclined to listen to the overtures of the Spanish government; and, in return for championing a quarrel which was not his own, win an ally for a war which he could not conclude².

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 95, 96.

² A passage in the instructions given to Bussy supports this view: "Le sieur de Bussy doit aussi marquer de la confiance à M. le comte de Fuentes, ambassadeur d'Espagne. La cour de Madrid a proposé à Sa majesté de conclure un traité offensif et défensif. Le projet de ce traité tel qu'il a été communiqué par le marquis de Grimaldi, serait sujet à de grands inconvénients dans les circonstances présentes. Le Roi a jugé à propos de diviser en deux parties le projet espagnol et de proposer à Sa Majesté Catholique un traité d'amitié, de garantie, purement défensif, lequel serait une espèce de pacte de famille. Il est à présumer que la négociation de ce traité qui est si analogue à l'intérêt et aux sentiments des deux souverains, aura le succès que l'on en doit attendre. De plus, le Roi qui a communiqué à Sa Majesté Catholique sa position actuelle politique, vis-à-vis de l'Angleterre, proposera à ce prince de différer les engagements offensifs contre la Grande-Bretagne

Thus, for different reasons, both Spain and Austria desired to delay the conclusion of peace, and had cause to fear the pacific tendencies of Choiseul. The latter would shun an alliance with Spain as long as he retained hope of peace with England. But he was not a free agent, and would be willing to throw himself into the arms of Spain if he found that he could only make peace with England upon terms to which he could not afford to agree. The situation was intricate, and difficult to unravel; but it is at least certain that the longer the negotiations continued the greater would be the chance of failure; for time would be given to the Austrian and Spanish factions to bring pressure to bear upon Choiseul, and drive him to continue the war.

It was on the last day of March, 1761, that the Russian ambassador in England, Prince Galitzin, communicated to Pitt the terms of peace proposed by the French government¹. They appeared to be of a liberal and conciliatory character. England and her allies were invited to take part in a peace congress which was to meet at Augsburg²; but, as the delays of an European congress are proverbial, Choiseul suggested that the attainment of peace might be

jusqu'à ce qu'il soit instruit du degré de volonté que le Roi et le ministre britanniques ont pour la paix en général, et les conditions définitives que, relativement à la France, ils voudront mettre au rétablissement de la paix entre les deux royaumes. Si les Anglais se prêtaient à une paix raisonnable, il serait contraire à l'objet du Roi, de signer un traité offensif contre l'Angleterre, lequel traité ranimerait certainement le feu de la guerre. Si, au contraire, le ministère britannique porte ses prétentions à un degré insoutenable, nous tâcherons de conserver, en ce cas, la bonne volonté de l'Espagne, pour qu'elle se joigne à nous dans le seul parti qui restera de se faire rendre justice par les armes." Quoted in Waddington's *La Guerre de Sept Ans*, iv. 514, 515.

¹ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, i. 41; P. R. O., *Foreign State Papers Miscell.*, April 3rd, 1761.

² This congress never met.

facilitated if the particular interests of England and France were considered separately. As a basis of discussion, he suggested that the two countries should remain in possession of the territory they occupied in various parts of the world at certain fixed dates. In Europe, May 1st, 1761, was the date named as determining possession; in the West Indies and Africa, July 1st, 1761; and in the East Indies, September 1st, 1761. These epochs, however, were not to be taken as final or beyond discussion. They, as well as the question of the compensation to be given for the surrender of the conquests of each country, were to be subjects of negotiation¹.

Such terms were by no means disadvantageous to England; and Newcastle was overjoyed to find the enemy so liberally inclined². Pitt was not so enthusiastic, and thought that he espied a dangerous ambiguity in the proposals³. He suspected that Choiseul intended to consider those portions of the territories of the elector of Hanover and the landgrave of Hesse, England's allies, which had been occupied by the French, as conquests wrested from Britain; and if his suspicions were correct, the terms were not so favourable as Newcastle imagined. It would be impossible for England to allow her allies to suffer for the part they had taken in the war; and, therefore, if Choiseul's offer was accepted, part of the English conquests might have to be sacrificed in order to win back for the German princes what they had lost.

It was not necessary, however, to reject the French terms because of an ambiguity; nor in the English answer was the doubtful point touched upon⁴. The English ministers agreed to send representatives to the congress at Augsburg,

¹ *Parliamentary History*, xv. 1023—1025.

² Add. MS. 32921, f. 272.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ This reticence was due to Pitt. Add. MS. 32921, f. 340.

and to conduct separate negotiations with France. Assent was given to the principle of *uti possidetis* as laid down by Choiseul; but the actual dates named in the French proposals were not agreed to, that point being left over for further discussion. Choiseul returned a far from conciliatory answer. Retreating from the position he had formerly taken up, he declared that the dates, as fixed by France in her first proposals, could not be changed; and that the continental war could not be brought to a conclusion unless, at the same time, France and England had arrived at a pacific settlement¹. The demand that the epochs must be taken as fixed was rejected by the cabinet at a meeting on April 27th; and it has been reported that Pitt was largely responsible for the firm line adopted². His attitude was quite intelligible, even to those who disapproved of it. He hoped soon to hear of the capture of Belleisle, against which an English expedition had been despatched; and as France would probably be willing to redeem that island at a great cost, it was important that the dates should be so arranged as to leave England in possession of it. The final determination of the epochs must therefore be left until Belleisle had been taken.

The preliminary moves having been made, it was necessary for the two courts to exchange representatives. It was arranged that Bussy should come to England and Stanley go to France. The instructions to be given to the English representative were thoroughly discussed at a cabinet meeting on May 13th³. It was agreed that Stanley must inform Choiseul that England desired a separate peace with France, to be concluded before and independently of the general European pacification; but a far

¹ *Parl. Hist.*, xv. 1028—1030; Add. MS. 32922, f. 61.

² *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, I. 43.

³ Add. MS. 32923, f. 63.

more knotty question was whether the losses of the German allies of England should be counted as conquests made upon the English crown. From the outset of the negotiations, Pitt had realised the importance of this question; and at the cabinet meeting demanded that Stanley should receive definite instructions regarding it. He refused, however, to express any opinion himself; and this unusual reticence aroused the distrust of his colleagues who suspected that he was encouraging them to do what he feared to do himself. It would be dangerous to declare that the German allies of the English crown should be left for relief to the congress of Augsburg, for the king, in his capacity of elector of Hanover, might well be offended by such treatment; but if, on the other hand, the conquests of England were sacrificed in order to buy back the territories of petty German princes, popular disapproval might be evoked, and the cry raised that once more England was being sacrificed to Germany. Safety lay in the path of inaction; and Pitt's colleagues refused to be driven where he himself was disinclined to go. No decision was arrived at, nor was Stanley given instructions on this point, but he received orders not to sign any act with France, without the authority of one of the secretaries of state; and, though the negotiations were to be considered as separate from those to be conducted at Augsburg, he was instructed to inform the French minister that England would not desert her ally, the king of Prussia¹.

With the despatch of Bussy and Stanley to their respective destinations, the negotiations may be said to have begun in earnest. In conversation with Pitt, Bussy did not show himself pacifically inclined, though to Newcastle and Hardwicke he was conciliatory throughout².

¹ Thackeray's *Life of Pitt*, i. 506—509.

² Add. MS. 32923, f. 367; *Ibid.* 32926, f. 205.

He was reported by Stanley to be in the interests of a family opposed to Choiseul¹; and it is not unlikely that he utilised his official position to work as an ally of the party in France opposed to peace. If this were so, it would explain the difference of his attitude towards Pitt and Newcastle. Time must be given to allow of an alliance being concluded between France and Spain, and, therefore, the peace party in the English cabinet must be encouraged to continue the negotiations. But to guard against the contingency of terms being offered by England which Choiseul could accept with perfect safety to his reputation, Pitt must be induced to believe that the French government was not sincerely desirous of peace; and a haughty and unbending attitude on the part of the French emissary would go far towards conveying this impression.

If Pitt was disappointed by his conversations with Bussy, Stanley formed a very favourable opinion of Choiseul. The latter showed himself conciliatory and ready to meet the English representative half-way. Returning to his original proposition, he consented to allow the epochs to be made a subject of negotiation; but argued that the German allies of the English crown must be included in the treaty between the two countries. This demand, though it might cause unpleasant consequences, was only reasonable; and after the fall of Belleisle, which capitulated on June 7th, the English ministers were ready to offer terms of peace. These were decided upon at a cabinet meeting on June 16th². The epochs were so arranged as to include Belleisle amongst the English possessions; and it was expressly stipulated that the terms agreed upon between the two courts must be

¹ Thackeray's *Life of Pitt*, II. 524.

² *Grenville Papers*, I. 365, 367.

considered as final irrespective of what happened at Augsburg, and that the treaty must be signed by August 1st.

Though the English ministers were reported to have agreed, unanimously to these proposals¹, it is not likely that they would have escaped criticism in France. As a matter of fact, they were never considered, for Choiseul, before he had seen the English despatch, had confided to Stanley terms of peace to be communicated to the English government. The greatest stress was laid upon the necessity of secrecy; and the offer was only to be communicated to those ministers whom it was absolutely necessary to trust. By these new proposals Choiseul abandoned the principle of *uti possidetis* which he had been the first to enunciate, and sketched out a definite settlement. Minorca was to be restored to England, in return for which, Guadeloupe, Mariegalante, and Goree were to be given back to France. Canada, with new boundaries, was to remain in the possession of England; but the island of Cape Breton, lying to the north-east of Nova Scotia, was to be restored to France on the condition that it should not be fortified. The French were still to enjoy the fishing privileges off the coast of Newfoundland granted to them by the treaty of Utrecht; but they undertook to surrender their conquests from the German allies of England².

There is no reason to believe that Choiseul was acting insincerely in offering these terms. They were dictated by a desire for peace and a fear of the faction who schemed to continue the war. If they had been accepted, England would have regained possession of Minorca and acquired the province of Canada in the New World; and it might

¹ *Grenville Papers*, i. 365, 367.

² *Thackeray's Life of Pitt*, i. 539.

be argued that this would afford ample compensation for the five years of warfare. France, on the other hand, would not have surrendered everything of any value. Canada would no longer be hers, and Minorca would once more be in the possession of England; but the fishing rights off Newfoundland would not have been forfeited, and the possession of Cape Breton implied the enjoyment of the fisheries in the gulf of St Lawrence¹. Choiseul, indeed, had defined his policy far more than he had ever done before. To win England over to the side of peace, he had offered to surrender a large and important province: to placate his fellow-countrymen, he had preserved the French fishing rights in the American seas. It was a daring bid for peace, an attempt to over-ride the opposition of the Austrian faction, and to free his country from its most formidable antagonist².

A critical point in the negotiations had been reached; and whether peace was concluded depended very largely upon the events of the next few weeks. Newcastle, delighted with the French terms, flattered himself that the end of the war was in sight; but Bute displayed greater acuteness, and was far less enthusiastic³. The cabinet met on June 24th to consider the French proposals⁴. All the ministers agreed in refusing to allow the boundaries of Canada to be defined anew, and in repudiating the demand that Cape Breton should be restored to France. Over the question of the Newfoundland fisheries they disagreed. Pitt's views on this point were well known;

¹ It is unlikely that Choiseul would have wished to retain Cape Breton except he proposed that France should preserve her right of fishing in the gulf of St Lawrence.

² It is difficult to understand Choiseul's desire for secrecy except that he feared that the terms might be misunderstood in France, and afford a handle for his opponents.

³ Add. MS. 32924, f. 311.

⁴ *Ibid.*

and it could have caused no surprise to his colleagues when he argued against this concession. Supported by his brother-in-law, Lord Temple, he was opposed by Granville, Hardwicke, Bedford, Halifax, and Newcastle. They did not deny the value to England of such a monopoly if it could be acquired, but dwelt upon the jealousy it would provoke among the maritime powers of Europe. With legal acuteness, Hardwicke pointed out that if France was denied the rights granted her by the treaty of Utrecht, she could hardly be expected to fulfil the stipulations of the same treaty regarding the fortifications of Dunkirk. Between the two parties Bute steered a middle course. He was anxious that an attempt should be made to expel the French from the Newfoundland fisheries, but was content to abandon the demand if refused by Choiseul. The question was left undecided, until the cabinet met again; but, in the interval, Bute was careful to inform Newcastle that the king approved of the policy which his favourite had advocated¹.

The attitude of those who opposed Pitt on this point is certainly not without justification. An acquisition may be of great value, but this does not constitute a cogent reason for demanding it as a necessary condition of peace. To drive the enemy to despair by exacting too onerous terms is faulty diplomacy. A treaty must of necessity be of the nature of a compromise; and few wars would have been concluded, save by the complete exhaustion of the combatants, if the victorious country had always enforced an unconditional surrender upon its defeated opponent. Moreover, particular circumstances might render it inexpedient to press France closely on this point. She had enjoyed the right of fishing off Newfoundland for many years; and to be called upon to surrender it at

¹ Add. MS. 32924, f. 311.

a time when she was to be compelled to abandon the gulf of St Lawrence, might well seem too exacting. There can be little doubt that Newcastle and his friends were right in their opposition to Pitt; but they did not know how right they were. They were unaware of the perils which beset Choiseul, and how fatal it would be for him to conclude a peace which could be construed as unduly favourable to England.

Bute, more influenced by considerations of domestic than of foreign policy, played a deeper and more subtle game. Convinced that neither he nor his master was in a position to give hostages to fortune, he desired above all things to avoid anything which might reflect unpopularity upon the king; and, anxious as he was for peace, he was cautious as to the means of obtaining it. It would seriously hinder the cause he had so much at heart if he could be taunted with having prevented Pitt from gaining a valuable acquisition for England. He could not afford to throw in his lot with Newcastle and his followers; but neither did he dare to take his stand by the side of Pitt, and imperil the chance of peace. He chose the path of compromise and safety; and utilised the two opposing parties for his own ends.

The cabinet met again on Friday, June 26th; and Pitt placed before the assembled ministers the draft of his answer to the French proposals¹. He explained that he had framed his reply in accordance with what he had understood to be the wishes of the majority of the council, leaving the point of the Newfoundland fisheries undetermined; and then went on to say that he considered the policy advocated by Bute puerile and illusory. This provoked the latter to defend his opinion with no little asperity. To calm him, he was assured that the form in

¹ Add. MS. 32924, f. 311.

which the letter had been cast ensured that an attempt would be made to expel the French from the Newfoundland fisheries; and, to place the matter beyond doubt, a sentence was added stating that the French could not be permitted to continue to enjoy the rights granted by the treaty of Utrecht without substantial compensation. Stanley was also instructed to inform Choiseul that England would only consent to restore Guadeloupe and Mariegalante in return for the immediate evacuation of the territory of her German allies; and that peace could not be made unless France consented to surrender Canada in its entirety, together with the rights of fishing, to cede Senegal and Goree to England, to reduce Dunkirk to the condition stipulated for by the treaty of Utrecht, and to restore all that she had conquered in Germany¹.

Choiseul was disappointed by the English answer. He had striven for peace but had failed to soften the hearts of the British ministers. He might well feel that they had accepted all his concessions and retained all their own prejudices. It was the question of the fisheries which weighed most heavily upon him. He affected to care little for the French fishing rights off Newfoundland; but pleaded for a defenceless port in Cape Breton, which might serve as a shelter for the French fishing boats. "Donnez-nous," he remarked to Stanley, "de la pêche et sauvez nous le point d'honneur pour Dunkerque, car ce n'est que cela la paix est faite²." The parting of the ways had come. Choiseul had followed one line of policy, and it had ended in failure. He had discovered that peace with England could only be bought by the surrender of the fisheries; and the price was more than he could afford to pay. By his side stood Grimaldi, the Spanish am-

¹ Thackeray's *Life of Pitt*, I. 543.

² *Ibid.* II. 532.

bassador in France, tempting him with the bribe of an alliance with Spain; and as the hope of peace with England faded, the value of the Spanish alliance increased. With a new ally it might still be possible to continue the war. France was not yet at the end of her resources, and England was feeling the burden of the contest. The negotiations were continued, but henceforth Choiseul showed a greater compliance towards Spain, and prepared for a contingency which did not seem unlikely to come to pass.

It is well to remember that Pitt was not solely responsible for the English demands which induced Choiseul to waver in his inclination towards peace and to draw nearer to Spain. Bute was equally convinced that the limits of concession had been reached; and censured Bedford for being too ready to make sacrifices in the cause of peace¹. There was a danger of a deadlock. Both countries seemed determined not to make any further concessions; and Choiseul, having failed to conciliate his opponents, endeavoured to intimidate them. The French terms which arrived in England on July 20th breathed no spirit of compromise, and if the English ministers had found fault with the former proposals, they were not likely to be content with these. Choiseul again

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 29—34. M. Waddington, however, is of a different opinion: "A notre avis, c'est bien à Pitt qu'incombe la responsabilité de l'échec. Comme conditions de paix, il était bien déterminé à n'accorder que celles qui imposent au vaincu la loi du vainqueur. Humilier la France, ruiner son commerce, lui enlever ses colonies, et détruire sa marine, il n'eut pas d'autre but et ne le cacha pas. Il fit ajourner les concessions qui, accordées dès le début, eussent assuré la signature des préliminaires, les combattit avec énergie, et quand elles lui furent arrachées par ses collègues moins intraitables, il les transmit avec des expressions, des commentaires et des restrictions qui en atténuèrent beaucoup la portée." *La Guerre de Sept Ans*, IV. 600, 601.

demanding a share in the Newfoundland fisheries and the cession of Cape Breton; and though France agreed to surrender its conquests from the German allies of England, an exception was made of the territories of the king of Prussia. It was argued that as these had been conquered and governed in the name of Austria, they could not be restored without the consent of that power. With these terms were despatched two private memorials from the French court to Bussy, calling upon England to terminate her dispute with Spain, and declaring that Austria could only consent to a separate peace between England and France if she were allowed to retain possession of the Prussian territory conquered by the French¹.

Choiseul had thrown down the glove. He had exchanged the olive branch for the sword, and sought to frighten England by vaunting the intimacy between France and Spain. It is difficult to believe that he expected his new offer to be accepted unmodified; it is far more probable that he intended it to serve another purpose. French pride would be gratified by the firm stand taken upon the fishery question; the gratitude of Austria might be expected for the loyalty of her ally. Spain could not be unmindful that France had championed her interests, and risked the hope of peace with England in conse-

¹ Thackeray's *Life of Pitt*, II. 547, 552, 553. The two private memorials were presented to Pitt by Bussy on July 23rd. Some time later, Choiseul informed Stanley that Bussy had been instructed to produce or suppress the Spanish memorial as he thought best; and that he had been persuaded to produce it by the Spanish ambassador in England, Fuentes. It seems clear that both Choiseul and Bussy were not in favour of immediately producing the Spanish memorial; and that this momentous step was taken in accordance with the wishes of Louis XV, Grimaldi, and Fuentes. Waddington's *La Guerre de Sept Ans*, IV. 560—563; *Le Duc de Choiseul et l'Angleterre*; *Revue Historique*, Tome Soixante-onzième; Thackeray's *Life of Pitt*, I. 570; Add. MS. 32925, f. 312; *Ibid.* 32926, f. 47.

quence. It was a diplomatic move of no little adroitness. France no longer stood detached from Austria and at the mercy of England. Choiseul had sown the seed which was to produce the Family Compact; and intimated to the English ministers that he had reached the limit of his concessions, and was preparing to conclude new alliances. England must decide either to forego her demands or incur the risk of driving Spain into the arms of France. Choiseul had thrown in his lot with the Austrian and Spanish factions, using them as pawns in the game against England.

The political situation in England was not favourable to a policy of surrender. The tide of victory showed no sign of turning, and news had just arrived of the capture of Pondicherry and Dominica¹. These fresh triumphs would strengthen the position of those who were in favour of continuing the war rather than yielding further to the demands of France. Bute, who was more in sympathy with Pitt than his opponents, had been endeavouring to "spirit up the Dukes of Newcastle, Devonshire, and Bedford, to something vigorous²." When, therefore, the cabinet met on July 21st, all the ministers were unanimous in regarding the French terms as unsatisfactory; and Bute is reported to have taken an active part in the discussion³. At a further meeting on July 24th, an answer to the French proposals was decided upon, and delivered by Stanley to Choiseul five days later. Unanimity again prevailed⁴; and though Newcastle complained of the manner in which Pitt had executed the instructions of the cabinet, he received little sympathy from either the king

¹ Add. MS. 32925, f. 202; *Grenville Papers*, I. 376.

² *Grenville Papers*, I. 376.

³ Add. MS. 32925, ff. 251, 329; *Ibid.* 35352, f. 176.

⁴ Thackeray's *Life of Pitt*, II. 554; *Grenville Papers*, I. 378, 379.

or Bute¹. The English answer was certainly not conciliatory. Many of the French demands were unhesitatingly rejected. The right of fishing in the gulf of St Lawrence and the possession of Cape Breton were again refused, and the two private memorials declared to be inadmissible. The French were not to continue to enjoy their privileges in the Newfoundland fisheries, unless prepared to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk; and the distinction drawn between the king of Prussia and the other German allies of England was definitely repudiated².

If Choiseul had hoped to intimidate the English government, he must be counted to have failed. No sign of surrender in any material point could be detected in the answer to his proposals. He had met with a serious rebuff, and the continuance of the war appeared certain, unless he was willing to forego some of his demands. The policy adopted by the English administration was agreeable to the wishes of Pitt, and warmly approved by Bute³. Left to themselves, Newcastle and his friends would probably have been more conciliatory; but they could not hope to prevail against the alliance of the two secretaries of state, and meekly followed their lead⁴. This union, temporary in its nature, and soon to be broken, exercised a decisive influence upon the course of the negotiations. It may be held to be responsible for their failure. Choiseul can hardly be blamed for thinking that the English ministers had taken up a position from which they would not retreat. Peace seemed out of the question

¹ Add. MS. 32926, f. 187.

² Thackeray's *Life of Pitt*, II. 557.

³ *Grenville Papers*, I. 378, 379.

⁴ For some curious gossip about the alliance of Pitt and Bute at this time, see the *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, I. pp. 51, 52.

unless he was willing to surrender the French fishing rights in the gulf of St Lawrence; and that concession he could not afford to make. Nothing was left but war, and after he received the English answer, he informed Havrincour, the representative of France in Sweden, that the king had definitely made up his mind to continue the war, but wished to conceal his intentions for the present, and to prolong the negotiations with England¹.

It is not difficult to discover the reason which impelled Choiseul to adopt this policy of duplicity. If the war was still to go on, France must win Spain as an ally; and it was necessary to gain time to bind the two countries together by a treaty of alliance. The positions of the two Bourbon powers were reversed. Up to this point it had been Spain that needed the assistance of France: it was now France that needed the assistance of Spain². Choiseul was about to take decisive action, to throw himself upon the side of Spain, and drag that power into the war, because he believed that peace with England had passed out of the sphere of practical politics. In this he was wrong. The firm attitude adopted by the English ministry depended solely upon the union of Pitt and Bute. The latter, thinking that France might respond to pressure, and anxious to avoid the reproach that he had been instrumental in preventing the country from receiving an adequate reward for her many triumphs, united with Pitt to withstand Choiseul's demands. But he was

¹ Add. MS. 32926, f. 67.

² Six months later, Hardwicke wrote to Newcastle, "I am now convinced that the intercepted letter in the summer from Choiseul to Havrincour in cypher wherein mention was made of training on the negotiations between England and France till the latter end of September—deserved more weight to be laid upon it than we were willing to allow it at that time" (Add. MS. 32932, f. 366).

not inclined to sacrifice the hope of peace to this alliance. If Choiseul adhered firmly to his terms, if it appeared necessary to purchase peace by allowing the French to fish in the gulf of St Lawrence, Bute would be willing to make the surrender demanded. The time was shortly to come when he would be in alliance with Newcastle, and urging that concessions should be made to France. When, however, that time came, he had waited too long. When England was willing to make concessions, France was too deeply committed to Spain to be able to accept them.

The negotiations continued, but Choiseul was no longer acting sincerely. He wished not for peace but for time to allow him to conclude an alliance with Spain: not till that had been accomplished could he afford to defy England. He was obliged to pursue an intricate and double-faced policy demanding no little care and skill. His plans would be seriously affected if the English ministers, convinced of the impossibility of attaining peace, broke off the negotiations before he had concluded an alliance with Spain; and, to guard against this danger, he was compelled to frame terms, sufficiently exacting to prevent them being accepted without hesitation, and yet sufficiently conciliatory to afford an excuse for the continuance of the negotiations. The French ultimatum, which arrived in England early in August, was inspired by these principles¹. Not intended to be accepted, it was meant to afford discussion by which the negotiations might be prolonged². Choiseul agreed to surrender Goree on certain conditions, but on the other points in dispute no material concessions were made. Yet to Newcastle, Bussy

¹ Thackeray's *Life of Pitt*, II. 566.

² For evidence that the ultimatum was not intended to be accepted, see von Ruville's *William Pitt, Graf von Chatham*, II. 458.

talked smoothly of peace, with the intention of buoying him up in the hope that all was not yet desperate¹.

The interest now centres round the divisions in the English cabinet. The success of Choiseul's tortuous policy depended on the peace party in the cabinet persisting in the negotiations despite the opposition of Pitt. Though Newcastle was shocked by the French ultimatum, he refused to believe that peace was out of the question². Anxious that the English demands should be as low as possible, he hesitated between surrender on the fishery question and the risk of continuing the war against the combined powers of France and Spain³. But against Newcastle and his friends stood Pitt who seemed to enjoy a greater predominance than ever. Stormy meetings of the cabinet were held on August 13th and the day following. At the first of these, it was agreed that a meeting between Pitt and Bussy must take place, and that a letter should be written to the latter informing him of this decision. Pitt presented the draft of this note to the ministers when they met on August 14th. It was not couched in conciliatory language. Formal regrets were expressed that "the happy moment to put an end to so many miseries is not yet come." The document did not escape criticism, but Pitt refused to alter what he had written; and the letter was finally approved by a narrow majority⁴.

Not only the policy of Choiseul, but the designs of the king were threatened by the power wielded by Pitt at

¹ Add. MS. 32926, f. 205.

² *Ibid.* 32926, f. 269, f. 281.

³ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 25, 26; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 35—36.

⁴ Add. MS. 35870, f. 297 (*E. H. R.*, April 1906); *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 136; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 26—28; *Thackeray's Life of Pitt*, II. 589. For an account of the interview between Pitt and Bussy, see Waddington's *La Guerre de Sept Ans*, II. 579, 580.

this moment. Bute had thrown in his lot with the popular minister, and had actively supported his policy against the opposition of Newcastle; but it was not the intention of either the king or his favourite to place supreme authority in the hands of a man who had climbed to power on the shoulders of the people, and looked for his strength, neither to the court nor to the parliament, but to the nation. Yet there was a danger that the outcome of Bute's policy would be the unchallenged supremacy of Pitt. The warmest advocate of peace, the Duke of Bedford, had already declared his intention of ceasing to attend cabinet meetings, and it was probable that his example would be followed, in the near future, by the Duke of Devonshire¹. Newcastle was threatening to retire², and, though he was prone to talk of retirement and remain in office, it was not likely that he would continue in the service of the crown, if abandoned by his friends. The utter collapse of the peace-party and the consequent triumph of Pitt did not appear improbable; and, if this catastrophe were to be averted, it was time that the king stretched out a saving hand to those in favour of concessions.

The first signs of a change of front on the part of Bute and his master can be discerned shortly after the cabinet meeting on August 14th. No answer had yet been given to the French ultimatum, and the character of the reply would largely depend upon the course of action pursued by Bute. If the latter continued in alliance with Pitt, the answer would be haughty and unyielding; only by winning Bute over to the side of peace could Newcastle hope to effect a modification of the English demands. And Bute was not unwilling to be won. He had gone far

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 36—39; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 30.

² *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 30—31; Add. MS. 32927, f. 68.

enough in support of Pitt. He could never be reproached with having failed, through inertia or cowardice, to gain important acquisitions for England, and it would not be the action of a wise statesman to imperil peace by persisting in demands which the enemy refused to grant. The time had come for retreat from a position which could be no longer occupied with advantage.

Thus, at the moment that Newcastle was striving to gain the assistance of Bute, the latter was willing to come to an arrangement with him. The Duke of Devonshire played the part of mediator, and discovered that he had undertaken an unexpectedly easy task. On August 16th he had an interview with the king who told him that he was in favour of allowing the French to fish in the gulf of St Lawrence, and of granting a port of shelter for their ships¹; and it is not without significance that he expressed himself most warmly in favour of the Duke of Bedford continuing to attend the meetings of the cabinet. Two days later, Devonshire had an interview with Bute, and was satisfied that the latter would support the peace party in the administration. At a second meeting, a few days later, the compact was sealed and signed. Bute readily agreed to the necessity of a good understanding with Newcastle, declared his readiness to work with him, and denied that he was connected with anybody else².

A cabinet revolution had occurred. Bute had united with the minister whom he had formerly neglected, and the balance of power in the administration had shifted. Newcastle and his friends were now in a stronger position than they had occupied since the beginning of the negotiations. They had secured an important ally, and

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 36—39.

² Add. MS. 32927, f. 154.

pursued a policy approved by the king. The change in the political situation was not long in making itself felt. An answer to the French ultimatum had to be framed; and the cabinet met on August 19th, August 20th, and August 24th, to settle the terms to be offered. At these meetings, the party in favour of concession and conciliation carried the day. Though Pitt and Temple neither modified nor concealed their opinions, they acquiesced in the decision of the majority, for the sake of preserving unanimity¹. The right of fishing in the gulf of St Lawrence, except on the coasts belonging to England, was granted to France; and the island of St Pierre was offered as a shelter for the French fishing vessels. The privileges of the French in the Newfoundland fisheries were to continue if the stipulations of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in regard to the fortifications of Dunkirk were executed. The ministers, however, still adhered to their demand that the French should restore that part of the territory of the king of Prussia which they had conquered².

Pitt had suffered a serious rebuff. He had been outvoted in the cabinet, and compelled to consent to a policy which he did not approve. France had been allowed more than he had ever been willing to grant. The material point of the fisheries had been decided in her favour; and in place of the stipulations of the treaty of Utrecht in regard to the fortifications of Dunkirk, the more moderate provisions of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had been substituted. Had such terms been offered a few weeks earlier, peace might have been made. It was now

¹ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 33—34; Add. MS. 35870, f. 301, f. 303 (*E.H.R.*, April 1906).

² In the *Parliamentary History*, and by Thackeray in his *Life of Pitt*, the English ultimatum is dated August 16th. It was not despatched, however, until later, as can be seen by the covering letter to Stanley, dated August 27th. Add. MS. 32927, f. 220.

too late. Choiseul had despaired prematurely, and reaped the fruits of his precipitancy. He had sold his freedom in order to insure his safety; and when England offered terms which, if a free agent, he would have gladly welcomed, he was too deeply committed to Spain to be able to accept them. The Family Compact between the two countries had been signed on August 15th, and France was pledged to the support of Spanish interests. To the English ultimatum Choiseul was obliged to return an answer which shattered the last remaining hopes of peace; and, after a meeting of the cabinet on September 15th, Stanley was ordered to return home.

Thus failure and disappointment stared in the face those who had so laboriously striven to make peace between two countries labouring under the burden of a world-waged conflict. The war was to continue; and one result of the attempt of the English ministers to come to terms with France had been to draw that country nearer to Spain. That was the new element in the situation; and whereas for France the situation had improved since the beginning of the negotiations, for England it had changed for the worse. The danger of a war with Spain had been discussed at the cabinet meeting which decided upon the recall of Stanley¹: it was a question which could not be neglected with safety. It was destined to precipitate a political crisis, to drive Pitt and Temple from power; and to sow the seeds of dissension between those who should have united to withstand the aggressive policy of the crown. With the exception of Pitt and Temple, the ministers have been severely censured for their policy at this juncture; but, before it is possible to form a fair judgment, it is necessary to form a clear idea of the information at their disposal. Not until

¹ Add. MS. 32928, f. 187, f. 193.

we know how much they knew of the relations between the two Bourbon powers, can we decide the degree of their guilt in refusing to follow the advice of Pitt and declare war upon Spain.

All were agreed that the intimacy between France and Spain had become much closer since the beginning of the peace negotiations. In addition to the information given in Stanley's despatches, there was the Spanish memorial to prove the friendly nature of the relations between the two countries. Intimacy, however, varies in degree, and, as existing between two countries, can hardly prove a dangerous factor in international politics unless ratified and cemented by a formal treaty of alliance. The Family Compact had been signed on August 15th, and Spain had pledged herself to take up arms on behalf of France, if called upon to do so. The English ministers were aware of the existence of this treaty through an intercepted letter written by Grimaldi; and, from the same source, they acquired the information that France had pledged herself to continue the war until the Spanish grievances against England were removed¹. From Stanley they had learnt that France had undertaken to support Spanish interests in the negotiations with England². What they did not know, and it was an important lacuna in their information, was that, by an article of the Family Compact, Spain had pledged herself to go to war on behalf of France.

Such was the information at the disposal of those who had to decide upon the proper policy to be pursued. Reduced to the simplest terms, the question was whether England should declare war on Spain because she suspected that country of an alliance with France directed

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 139—141.

² *Ibid.*, II. 140, Note 2.

against her interests. Much could be urged in favour of a bellicose policy. It was in the highest degree unlikely that France would have committed herself so deeply to the interests of Spain, and imperilled the hope of a pacific settlement with England in consequence, except she could count upon receiving some material advantage in return. The nature of the advantage was not known; but it could be safely surmised. Everything pointed to the fact that Spain was ready, on behalf of her ally, to take up arms against England: that was the price she would be called upon to pay in return for French assistance. This was the conclusion at which Pitt arrived, and he, therefore, favoured a declaration of war against Spain. The information he possessed was not such as could be published to the world as a justification of his conduct. But he was willing to incur odium, ready to suffer the accusation of needlessly provoking hostilities, knowing that time would justify him. He saw that war between England and Spain was certain. England, standing as she did to Spain, could not disregard or view with indifference a rapprochement between that country and France. Inquiries as to the exact nature of the Family Compact could not be avoided; and if, as seemed highly probable, that treaty contained clauses hostile to England, the inquiries would end in war. Therefore, if Pitt was correct in his surmise as to the character of the treaty, war between the two countries was inevitable, sooner or later; and it was to the interest of England that it should be sooner. Speculation, and the weighing of evidence, led to a conclusion which could not be proved, but yet was invested with the strongest degree of probability. It is the mark of a great statesman to be willing to act upon the most probable hypothesis: he who waits for certainty denies his own powers of insight, and gives the advantage to the

enemy. It was no craving to extend the area of warfare, no desire for a fresh foe to be overthrown by the victorious arms of England, that drove Pitt to adopt a warlike attitude: he saw that a conflict with Spain was inevitable, but that it still remained within the power of England to shatter the designs of that country by driving her into war before she was ready to undertake it.

Save for Lord Temple, Pitt stood alone in his opinion. To Newcastle his policy seemed that of a visionary, flown with conquest and intoxicated by success. The resources of England were not unlimited, and Newcastle had Lord Anson's authority for believing them insufficient to support a war with Spain¹. He fixed his gaze on the present rather than on the future; and preferred to postpone the evil day, hoping that time would bring a solution of the difficulty. It was a policy of misplaced caution, of waiting upon events rather than attempting to control their course. Bute was also anxious to avoid an immediate declaration of war. The enlargement of the area of hostilities would render a pacification more difficult, and as long as England continued at war, the services of Pitt seemed indispensable. War with Spain would therefore tend to delay the execution of the design to restore the personal power of the crown; and therefore resort must be had to diplomacy to avert the threatened evil. Neither Newcastle nor Bute desired to neglect the question of the relations existing between France and Spain; but they deprecated hasty action, and sought to unravel the Gordian knot by means of diplomacy, rather than to cut it by an immediate declaration of war.

The cleavage of opinion on this question between Pitt and the majority of the ministers became clear at the cabinet meeting on September 18th. Pitt advised that

¹ Add. MS. 32928, f. 187, f. 193.

Lord Bristol, the English ambassador at the court of Spain, should be instructed to inform the Spanish government that it was the intention of the English king "to take forthwith such necessary and timely measures as God has put into his hands for the defence of the realm." In order to avoid ambiguity and misconception, he had committed his speech to writing, and this is the document generally known as the "advice in writing." So daring and high-handed a policy found no supporter in the cabinet except Temple. The other ministers were adverse to what was nothing short of a declaration of war. They advised that Bristol should be instructed to ask a full and clear explanation from the Spanish government of its conduct; and should support the demand by the intimation that, if no satisfactory answer was returned, a breach of diplomatic relations would probably follow¹. When the council was over, Bute drew Pitt apart, and pressed him to withdraw the paper he had read, or at least to refrain from giving it to the king, as he had threatened to do. Pitt, however, was obdurate, and stubbornly refused to listen to the arguments of those who disagreed with him².

He staked his reputation upon the correctness of his opinion, and time was to prove him right. He saw that those who favoured a resort to diplomacy were but taking a longer road to the same end; and that delay would be more profitable to Spain than to England. He might well think it possible for him to bend his colleagues to his will by a threat of resignation. The war with France still continued; and the ministers might naturally hesitate to drive from power the man who had raised England to a pinnacle of glory she had not attained for many years.

¹ Add. MS. 32928, f. 225, f. 227, f. 233, f. 259.

² Add. MS. 32928, f. 259.

The cry would be raised that the great war minister had been sacrificed by his colleagues, blind to the grandeur of his schemes; and Bute regarded the resignation of Pitt as an evil to be averted¹. Yet there was the other side to the picture. If Pitt was indispensable because there was war with France, a war with Spain would render him even more so. His power would be more firmly established than ever, and he would enjoy the position of a dictator of the destinies of England.

A crisis had suddenly arisen for which Bute was not prepared; and his policy betrays signs of confusion. He aimed at maintaining peaceful relations with Spain, and retaining Pitt in office: it was an attempt to reconcile irreconcilables. Pitt had refused to listen to the arguments of Bute; but there was still a hope that he would give way, as he had done on a former occasion, to the united opinion of his colleagues. It was probably for this purpose that Newcastle, Devonshire, Mansfield, and Bute met at Devonshire House on September 19th². But Pitt had taken up a position from which he did not intend to retreat; and, when the cabinet met on September 21st, he was found to be as resolute as ever³. Bute discovered that a middle course was not practicable, and, forced to select one of two unpleasant alternatives, chose to drive Pitt from power rather than embark upon a war with Spain⁴. The die had been cast, and Pitt's fate was sealed. Thwarted by his colleagues, he could not look for support

¹ Add. MS. 32928, f. 259.

² Add. MS. 32928, f. 259; Lord Hardwicke was unable to be present on account of the death of his wife.

³ Add. MS. 32928, f. 303: *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 37—40.

⁴ It is possible that Bute may have been influenced by a letter from Stanley, which arrived on September 21st, and spoke more hopefully of the prospect of peace with France. See Hunt's *Political History of England*, 1760—1801, p. 29.

to the court. The king shewed himself actively hostile to the minister whom he had formerly supported against Newcastle. He declined to accept the "advice in writing¹," and refused to abandon all hope of peace with France². A few days later, it was reported that the king was more offended than ever with Pitt, and wished to be rid of him³.

The toils were closing round the man who had once domineered alike over the cabinet and the court. He attempted to convince his colleagues, but found them as obstinately rooted in their opinions as he was in his. It was in vain that he laid stress upon an intercepted letter from Grimaldi, which stated that Choiseul had been willing to make the settlement of the Spanish grievances against England a necessary preliminary to the conclusion of peace between the latter country and France⁴. This additional piece of evidence of the close connection between the two countries was disregarded by those who had made up their minds that war with Spain should be the last resource of baffled diplomacy⁵. Matters were brought to a crisis by the return of Stanley, who arrived in England on the last day of September. He brought no news, and definite action could no longer be postponed. It was necessary that instructions should be sent to Lord Bristol, and the question decided whether England should be involved in a struggle with a new antagonist or be deprived of the services of her greatest statesman.

The cabinet met on Friday, October 2nd⁶. Ten ministers were present, and the proceedings opened by

¹ Add. MS. 32928, f. 303; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 37—40.

² *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 40—42.

³ *Ibid.*, I. 43—44.

⁴ *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 141—4.

⁵ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 43—44.

⁶ Add. MS. 32929, f. 18 (*E. H. R.*, Jan. 1906); Add. MS. 35870, f. 310 (*E. H. R.*, April 1906).

Pitt explaining the business which had called them together. He declared himself to be of the same opinion as before, and referred to the recently intercepted letter from Grimaldi as supporting the resolution he had formed from the first¹. All the ministers joined in the discussion; but, except by Lord Temple, not one word was spoken in favour of Pitt. By some, a war with Spain was declared to be impracticable: by others, it was denounced as unjustifiable. Bute argued that an intolerable strain would be placed upon the resources of England, prevented as she was from abandoning any part of the existing contest, and Lord Anson roundly declared that the English navy was not in a fit condition to meet the fleets of Spain. Pitt and Temple stood alone. The latter, stating his opinion once again, left the council chamber. Pitt made a farewell speech. He declared that he would be responsible for nothing that he did not direct, and intimated his intention of resigning office. No resolution was come to upon the instructions to be given to Lord Bristol: all that was determined was that reinforcements should be sent to admiral Saunders, in case the Spaniards began hostilities.

After the meeting, there could be no doubt that Pitt would shortly tender his resignation. A blind belief in the possibility of maintaining peace with Spain, a dread of enlarging the area of hostilities, and jealousy of his pre-eminence, had all contributed to drive him from power. He did not fall a victim to a court intrigue, nor was his overthrow a triumph for the crown. Events had shaped themselves in a way which had not been foreseen; and the expulsion of Pitt from office, before peace had

¹ In the account given by Newcastle (Add. MS. 32929, f. 18), the date of Grimaldi's letter is given as August 13th: this is obviously a slip for September 13th. In Hardwicke's version (Add MS. 35870, f. 310) the date is stated correctly.

been concluded with France, was not part of the original programme of the court. Bute had been driven into a course of action which he did not approve, in order to avoid a greater evil¹. He was able with perfect sincerity to regret the loss of his great colleague, as the administration, bereft of the one member implicitly trusted by the nation, was sure to be jealously scrutinised; and he himself would be held responsible for the dismissal of Pitt, and for any misfortunes which might follow. Bute was embarking upon an unknown sea, and might well shrink from the prospect. He had failed to attain the end for which he had striven, and had been obliged to do what he could rather than what he would. Unpopular with the people of England, he was left to conduct a war and conclude a peace; and, in the discharge of these duties, it would be only too easy to add fuel to the flames of popular hatred, and enable Pitt to pose as the champion of the people against the mismanagement of the king and his Scotch favourite.

But, if the resignation of Pitt was unfortunate for the success of the designs which Bute had most at heart, Newcastle, though he did not know it, was the real victim. Since the accession of George III, Newcastle had pursued a policy for which he was to suffer in after years. Fretting under what he thought the tyranny of Pitt, he had gladly allied with the court against him. Bute had used the old statesman as a pawn in the game: and now that Pitt had gone, Newcastle was useless. He was left at the disposal of the king to do with him as he pleased. Politically, he had signed his own death warrant, and was quickly to reap the reward of his treachery and lack of foresight.

¹ Adolphus' *History of England*, i., Appendix, p. 572.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUPREMACY OF BUTE.

THE position of the administration after the cabinet meeting on October 2nd was far from secure. It was not a moment of triumph for Lord Bute. He had seen his plans miscarry; and if he had gained a victory, it was one which might prove more disastrous than a defeat. Entangled in the net of his own diplomacy, he had been obliged to force Pitt into resignation, before he had succeeded in making peace with France, and in the midst of negotiations with Spain only too likely to precipitate a quarrel with that power. He found himself supreme in the administration under conditions which he had not and would not have chosen. He had gone too far, and yet not far enough, on the path which the king had commanded him to tread, to seek for safety in retreat. The mark of popular hatred, he must seize the reins of power which had fallen from the hands of Pitt, and guide the destinies of a nation which neither liked nor trusted him. Few men have occupied a more unenviable position. Judged and condemned before he had been tried, he was embarked upon an enterprise which seemed fated to end in failure. If he pursued a conciliatory foreign policy, and succeeded in concluding peace with France and placating Spain, the cry would be raised that the honour and glory of England were betrayed by a Scotch favourite who, conscious of his own incapacity, was willing to make any sacrifice in

order to rid himself of a burden which he could not sustain. If, in order to win the approval of the people, he engaged in warlike undertakings, it would at once be said that the greatest war minister, ever known in the annals of English history, was without a seat in the administration at a time when his advice was most needed. When the many and overwhelming difficulties under which Bute was obliged to work are remembered, his failure is not so surprising as his partial success. When he resigned office in the spring of 1763, he had incurred the hatred of the people to a greater degree than any minister since Strafford. No crime was too great to attribute to him; and the dislike of the nation pursued him even in his retirement. Yet he had succeeded in bringing the long war to a conclusion; and had thus attained one end for which he had endured the distasteful burden of official life. If he failed in his great project of winning the national support for the crown, his want of success was due far more to the position he occupied as the king's favourite than to the policy he pursued. He struggled against circumstances too strong to be overcome except by consummate genius; and that he did not possess.

The first task to be performed, after the stormy meeting on October 2nd, was the selection of Pitt's successor; and the choice was not easy to make. If a nonentity in politics or a creature of the court was appointed to fill the vacant place, the prestige of the ministry, which would inevitably be affected by the loss of its greatest member, would be still further diminished. Yet if merit and ability were sought for and acquired, Bute might discover that he had endangered his own predominance in the cabinet, and created a Frankenstein to his own destruction. Each extreme had its own peculiar dangers, and the problem was rendered more difficult of solution by the jealousy

with which Newcastle regarded Bute's growing power. Though Newcastle and Bute had allied together to thwart the aggressive designs of Pitt, neither friendship nor confidence existed between them. Their very success made further union impossible. Now that Pitt could no longer force his will upon his colleagues, Newcastle was free to indulge his jealousy of Bute, and the latter could give rein to the contempt he felt for the veteran statesman who had allowed himself to be used as a pawn in a game which he did not understand¹. This very real though still decently draped hostility between the two ministers accentuated the difficulty of choosing a new secretary of state. If a friend of Newcastle was chosen, Bute would find it difficult to control the decisions of the cabinet; and if the new minister was an ally and follower of Lord Bute, Newcastle might discover that he had lost more than he had gained by the retirement of Pitt.

It was necessary, however, to decide upon a new secretary of state without undue loss of time; and the ministers did not wait for Pitt to resign to discuss the candidates for the succession. Amongst those mentioned was Henry Fox. As far as ability went, Fox had every claim to consideration. He had once been Pitt's friendly rival, and had shown himself worthy of his great antagonist. He was known to be of a daring and defiant disposition, ready in debate, and undismayed in the face of adversity. But, lacking the moral qualities, and that lofty disregard of wealth which adorned his rival, Fox, at the critical moment of his career, had abandoned the path of glory and toil, and "sold his reputation for a song." He received the punishment that he deserved. He earned the reputation of an unscrupulous and treacherous politician; and

¹ For Bute's opinion of Newcastle, see *Grenville Papers*, i. 395—397.

few men in public life were so distrusted and disliked. His many admirable qualities, his devotion as a husband, his affection as a father, were forgotten or ignored by those who knew and feared him as a politician. Newcastle, who had felt the lash of his tongue, stood in awe of him; and had no wish to have him as a colleague. Bute was prepared to favour his claims to office, but not inclined to press the point in face of Newcastle's opposition¹. He recognised the danger of such an appointment. The contrast between Pitt with his contempt of personal profit, and Fox with his passion for the accumulation of wealth, could not fail to strike the most sluggish intellect. Bute neither wished nor could afford so scornfully to disregard public opinion. To replace the most popular by the most unpopular statesman in England, in order to secure Fox's valuable assistance, was an experiment too daring to be safe². He might be equally useful, and far less dangerous, in a more secret and subordinate capacity.

If it was not possible to give Fox the seals because of the evil reputation he had earned, the same objection could not be urged against the Duke of Bedford. The leader of a party, the members of which were regarded as among the most rapacious politicians of their time, he was free from the faults which disfigured his followers; and, if not a distinguished, was at least an honourable politician. He had held high office during the reign of the late king, and could not be charged with lack of political experience.

¹ Add. MS. 32928, f. 362 (*E. H. R.*, January 1906).

² *Ibid.* Andrew Stone, the friend of the Duke of Newcastle, remarked "that tho' he wished Mr Fox very well, he seldom saw him, and had a friendship for him, yet he would declare his opinion very clearly that the going from the most popular man (Mr Pitt) to the most unpopular man in England (Mr Fox) would give such an advantage to Mr Pitt as to put it out of Mr Fox's power 'to be of any service on this occasion.'" Add. MS. 32928, f. 362.

At the moment, he was far more in sympathy with Newcastle than Bute. Passionately in favour of peace, he had, in company with Newcastle, pressed for concessions to be made to France, only to find himself overruled by Pitt and Bute. If he was created secretary of state, Newcastle's position in the cabinet would be materially strengthened, and Bute might be saddled with a troublesome colleague. Bedford would be certain to oppose the adoption of an aggressive attitude towards Spain: and though Bute declared himself willing to waive any objections he might have, it is unlikely that he would have consented to an appointment which would have furnished Newcastle with an ally, and endangered his own supremacy¹.

Fox being ineligible on account of his unpopularity, and Bedford on account of his opinions, it seemed probable that the vacant post would fall by default to George Grenville. Few objections could be raised to such an appointment. He had already attained a prominent position in political life; and, though connected by marriage with Pitt, had gained a mild notoriety by daring to oppose his powerful kinsman². On the accession of George III, he had thrown in his lot with Lord Bute, though curiously enough it was not Bute but Newcastle who wished him to be given the seals³. Bute would have preferred to have Grenville as chancellor of the exchequer⁴, but Newcastle, who had no wish to have a friend of Bute as a colleague on the treasury board, strongly objected, and the project was abandoned. Grenville was asked to accept the secretaryship of state, and refused the offer. He had set his heart, not on high administrative office, but on becoming speaker of the

¹ Add. MS. 32928, f. 362 (*E. H. R.*, January 1906).

² Add. MS. 35352, f. 157.

³ Add. MS. 32928, f. 362 (*E. H. R.*, January 1906).

⁴ *Ibid.*

house of commons. His legal turn of mind, his grasp of detail, and his intimate acquaintance with parliamentary law and practice, admirably qualified him for the post which he coveted; and it was in an evil moment for his reputation that he agreed to forswear his ambition. But, though he consented to abandon the hope of becoming speaker, he steadily refused to accept the office of secretary of state. He professed to feel a delicacy in succeeding his brother-in-law, and remained deaf to all the arguments used to persuade him to avail himself of an opportunity which might not come again. But, though unwilling to take upon himself the task which Pitt had abandoned, he was not unready to come to the assistance of the ministers. It was agreed that, retaining his office of treasurer of the navy, he should be summoned to all the meetings of the cabinet, and be entrusted with the management of the house of commons.

The ministers had failed to find a suitable successor to Pitt; and were obliged to resort for a candidate to the second rank of politicians. The seals, which Grenville had refused, were accepted by Lord Egremont. The new secretary of state had never played a prominent part in public life; and his appointment was not likely to increase the prestige of the administration. Possessed of little capacity, he acts but a shadowy part in the history of his time, impressing his contemporaries as little as he has interested posterity. The brother-in-law of George Grenville, he would be likely to follow the latter's lead, and support Bute rather than Newcastle. Thus, by chance or by design, Bute had contrived, through the reconstitution of the administration, materially to strengthen his position in the cabinet¹. He might count upon the

¹ Newcastle believed that Bute never intended Grenville to be secretary of state, and that the appointment of Lord Egremont had been

assistance of Egremont and of Grenville who, as manager of the house of commons, would wield no inconsiderable power. Indeed the danger was that he might become too powerful. It would come within his province to use the means of bribery and corruption, which lay so ready to the hands of a minister in the eighteenth century, to gain and keep a majority for the administration in the lower house; and politicians, like dogs, were apt to become most closely attached to those who supplied their wants. If allowed to enjoy the usual degree of power allotted to the manager of the house of commons, Grenville might easily acquire an authority which would threaten that of Bute and the king; and it was to safeguard against this danger that his duties were limited and defined. In the words of Newcastle, Grenville was "to have the conduct of the house of commons in the manner my brother had, when he was paymaster general, and Mr Sandys chancellor of the exchequer¹." Towards the end of 1762, Grenville complained of the difficulty he experienced in conducting the business of the house of commons with such restricted powers²; and there can be little doubt that the limitations imposed on his authority were designed to retain the dispensation of patronage in the hands of the king. Men were not to be allowed to forget, as they had forgotten in the past, that the court was the source of all promotion.

decided upon at a meeting at Lord Granville's house on the evening of October 2nd. Until further evidence is forthcoming, it is impossible to attach much weight to Newcastle's suspicions on this point; but it is worth while to note that it was Lord Granville who advised Egremont to accept the offer of the secretaryship of state (Add. MS. 32929, f. 56: Hist. MSS. Comm., 6th Report, Appendix, p. 316).

¹ Add. MS. 32929, f. 152. This refers to the administration formed after the fall of Walpole from power.

² *Grenville Papers*, I. 482—485.

Lord Temple accompanied Pitt into retirement, but a new lord privy seal was not appointed till two months had elapsed. The office was of minor importance, and the delay, though possibly a cause of inconvenience, did not seriously hamper the transaction of official business. Newcastle fretted at Bute's procrastination, and pressed the claims of Lord Hardwicke. The latter was offered but refused the vacant office¹ which was finally given to the Duke of Bedford. It has been suggested by a writer, whose opinion has every claim to consideration, that the offer to Lord Hardwicke was a mere act of formal politeness, not meant to be taken seriously; and that, though it had always been intended that Bedford should be Temple's successor, his appointment was delayed until the diplomatic relations between England and Spain had become so strained as to render war inevitable, and thus the danger averted of Newcastle and Bedford uniting to prevent a conflict between the two countries². It cannot be said that any inherent improbability attaches to this view; but it would seem that further evidence is necessary before it can rank higher than a plausible and possible theory. Lord Hardwicke, though he held no office, had the right of attending the cabinet council and would not increase his influence by becoming lord privy seal. The Duke of Bedford, also without office, had also been in the habit of attending the cabinet meetings; and the office of lord privy seal, though of great dignity, was of little political importance; and did not apparently confer the right of being summoned to that inner cabinet at which the most important affairs were discussed³. But to whatever cause the delay in the appointment of Bedford may

¹ Harris' *Life of Hardwicke*, III. 269.

² von Ruville's *William Pitt, Graf von Chatham*, III. 23.

³ Walpole's *Memoirs of the reign of George III*, II. 255, note 3.

be due, whether to accident or design, it is at least certain that Bute had conferred office upon one ready to assist him in bringing the war with France to a conclusion.

The administration was thus reconstructed far more in the interest of Bute than of Newcastle. The former would not apparently have to fear the opposition of his new colleagues; but, if secure in that respect, he did not enjoy immunity from other dangers. Pitt, though he had been driven into resignation, still threatened the safety of his former associates. Great was the popular outcry at the news of his fall. Bute was forced to confess that the storm ran high in the city, always distinguished by its loyalty to the "great commoner"¹; and certain of the directors of the Bank of England had not minced their words in speaking of those who had outvoted but not outargued the greatest member of the administration². If Pitt had chosen to go into opposition, he could have played the part of a demagogue with terrible effect. It was within his power to lead and organise the ever rising opposition in the nation to the Scotch favourite who stood between the king and his people; and there must have been many who thought that the man, who had gained a reputation in early life by reckless opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, would not decline the opportunity thus offered him. The prospect was sufficiently serious to alarm the most experienced and cool-headed politician. Embittered by the frustration of his plans, and supported by the people, Pitt might prove far more formidable in opposition than he had ever been in power. Realising the danger, Bute attempted to avert it by depriving Pitt of popular support. The nation might think less of the hero who, though he had preferred to abandon office rather

¹ Add. MS. 32929, f. 74.

² Add. MS. 32929, f. 113.

than continue in an administration which he could not guide, was willing to partake of the bounty of the crown; and Pitt fell into the trap prepared for him. He refused the governorship of Canada, for which residence was not to be necessary; but accepted a peerage for his wife and a pension for himself; and the news was quickly published in the gazette, with the express purpose of diminishing his popularity¹.

The trick had an overwhelming, if temporary, success. The new peeress was quickly nicknamed Lady Cheat'em; and it was rumoured that the city was preparing to burn its former idol in effigy. Men, who took little or no interest in politics, were overwhelmed with distress on hearing the news. The poet Gray refused at first to believe that Pitt had sunk so low, and afterwards attributed his incredulity to an insufficient acquaintance with the writings of St Thomas à Kempis, "who knew mankind so much better than I²." The Duke of Devonshire concluded that Pitt had sold himself to the court³; and those, who had believed that amongst the politicians of the time there was at least one righteous man, acknowledged themselves mistaken, and confessed that Pitt was as willing to be bought as his contemporaries, and only differed from them in demanding a higher price. Such an outcry may well seem irrational at the present day; but it was not altogether devoid of justification. Amply as Pitt had deserved all that the king could offer, his conduct was open to misconstruction. Men had not yet learned to discriminate between the king and his ministers, and to oppose the administration was to oppose the court⁴. This belief, fostered by the previous two reigns in which opposition to the government might be interpreted as

¹ Add. MS. 32929, f. 143.

² Gray's *Works* (Mitford), III. 265.

³ Add. MS. 32929, f. 326.

⁴ *Ibid.*

support of the exiled Stuarts, was still alive; and nothing in the new reign had yet happened to encourage the idea that it was possible to oppose the ministry of the day and yet remain a faithful supporter of the crown. If, therefore, most men thought that Pitt had sold his freedom of action and liberty of speech in return for material comfort, they can be forgiven for their mistake. But it is not necessary to pardon Pitt for an act which involved no guilt. He accepted what the crown had to give, not as a bribe for what he was to do, but as a reward for what he had actually done; and did so with an easy conscience because he had determined to work in the future, as in the past, to promote the best interests of the nation, and, consequently, to render loyal service to the king.

The very success of Bute's stratagem was to be the cause of its failure. The tide of public opinion was running so strongly against Pitt that it was necessary for him to stem it. He wrote, and permitted the publication of, a letter in which he declared that the royal favours bestowed upon him had been infamously traduced as "a bargain for my forsaking the public¹." His unsupported word was sufficient to dispel the storm which had so suddenly gathered, and to regain for him his place in the affections of the people. It was now known that he had not sold himself for a "handful of silver"; and that one man still existed who would not barter his convictions for a peerage and a pension. Bute had struck in the dark, and the blow recoiled upon the striker. He had failed to deprive Pitt of the national support which constituted his strength, and had only succeeded in increasing his own unpopularity.

Pitt, however, was not the danger to the administration

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 158—159.

that Bute imagined. He is not to be numbered amongst those politicians "resolved to ruin or to rule the state"; and was far too patriotic to sacrifice the welfare of the country to his own aggrandisement. Time had curbed the faults of his youth, and he shrank from needlessly thwarting the government engaged upon a difficult task¹. He had no intention of throwing himself into factious and headlong opposition. But, if he was ready to support the ministers when he approved their measures, no man was less prepared to make a servile submission. He chose the part of the independent critic, awarding praise and blame where he thought they were deserved, and to Bute the prospect could not fail to be unpleasant. Careful as he might be, he knew that, if he was to carry his designs to a successful conclusion, he must do much that would cause offence to Pitt; and the latter would not be behind-hand in denunciation. If the danger was less than Bute imagined, it was yet by no means inconsiderable. Pitt might stand alone or at the head of a party; but, in either case, he would prove himself a formidable antagonist, and play the part of Abudah's hag to the administration. There was no minister fit to defend himself and his colleagues against the thunder of the great orator. Grenville, the leader in the house of commons, would be of little use in such an emergency. A tedious and pedantic debater, he would only serve to point the contrast between himself and the most inspiring speaker of

¹ He informed Hardwicke that "he did not know how much he should attend parliament. The supplies he would support to the utmost, both publicly and privately, as well of men and ships as of money. He did not intend to give any disturbance to administration, but if the causes of his quitting should be misrepresented or should be fallen upon, he should be obliged to set them in a true light and justify himself." Add. MS. 32929, f. 227.

the day. There was only one man fit to be put up in parliamentary combat with Pitt, and that was Henry Fox.¹ He was ready to place himself at Bute's disposal. As paymaster general he had found it easy to amass the wealth that he coveted, and now wished to gain the honours which the crown could confer. He desired a peerage for his wife; and, though the request was refused, he pledged himself to support the administration, to speak or keep silent in the house of commons as he thought best, and, binding himself to Bute, undertook to enter into no engagements with anyone else¹.

In securing the support of Fox, Bute had reckoned without George Grenville. The latter, who had refused to have any business transactions with Fox, was deeply chagrined when he heard of the arrangement into which Bute had entered². His predominance in the house of commons would be seriously endangered by the new recruit, and he began to meditate abandoning the task which he had undertaken. Bute could not afford to drive Grenville to despair. He needed him as the representative of the ministry in the house of commons, and as an ally in the struggle which was certain to take place, sooner or later, with Newcastle. However valuable the assistance that Fox could render, the loss of Grenville would be too high a price to pay for it; and, to placate the latter, Fox was instructed to refrain from taking part in debate³. Bute may have regretted that he was unable to make full use of the very great abilities which Fox possessed; but it

¹ Add. MS. 32929, f. 227, f. 279; Add. MS. 32930, f. 104; Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, I. 112—117.

² Add. MS. 32930, f. 104; *Grenville Papers*, I. 414—415.

³ Add. MS. 32930, f. 176, f. 220. This prohibition must not be taken too literally: it could only mean that Fox was not to play too prominent a part in debate.

was at least a gain that they could not be used against him. He had succeeded in securing the support of one of the foremost politicians of the day, and avoided the odium which he would have incurred by giving Fox a ministerial office.

Stress has been laid upon the various ministerial changes effected at this time because they were to exercise a decided influence upon the subsequent course of events. Bute was now in a stronger position than he had occupied before the fall of Pitt, and was ready to deal with those questions of foreign policy which called for settlement. Amongst these, the relations between England and Spain were, perhaps, of the most pressing importance. Instructions had to be sent to Lord Bristol who could hardly be allowed to remain ignorant any longer of the opinion of the cabinet. The administration, however, was not unanimous on this question; and Bute and Newcastle found themselves in opposite camps. The former had been opposed to an instant declaration of war as advised by Pitt, but he fully realised the danger of a close union between the two Bourbon powers, and desired that the Spanish government should be called upon to explain the nature of the treaty it had concluded with France. He was not unmindful that such a demand might provoke a war, and was willing to run that risk, rather than continue any longer in a state of uncertainty. He was anxious that no colour should be given to the charge that vigour and efficiency had left the administration with Pitt. It was better that England should be called upon to face a new enemy than the impression given that the ministers were sacrificing the honour of the country to a craven desire for peace. It was necessary, unless Bute wished to drive Pitt headlong into opposition, to pursue a bold and energetic policy; and teach Englishmen at home and

foreigners abroad that the national greatness did not depend upon a single man¹.

Newcastle, who perhaps did not see as far, was in favour of the adoption of a more conciliatory policy. He was adverse to any step being taken likely to provoke Spain into taking up arms. He wished instructions to be sent to Lord Bristol, but desired them to be of a character least likely to arouse the animosity of Spain². He feared a war with Spain, not only because he was pacifically inclined, but also for a reason which does not appear on the surface. He had cause to suspect that Bute was in favour of abandoning the war in Germany, of withdrawing the English troops from that country, and devoting the energies of the nation to the struggle with France on the sea and in the new world³. To such a policy Newcastle was strongly opposed; and he was not destitute of arguments in support of his case. The withdrawal of the English troops from Germany could hardly be justified, except on the plea of necessity. If it could be shown that the resources of England were no longer equal to the demands made upon her, the abandonment of the continental war might be excused; and this plea could be urged, with greater effect and less danger of refutation, if England was compelled to embark upon a war with Spain, and thus impose upon herself an additional financial burden. It would probably be unjust to believe, as Newcastle did, that Bute was anxious for war with Spain in order to abandon hostilities on the continent with a better grace. He was impelled by other reasons to adopt a defiant attitude towards Spain. Yet it is true to say that

¹ Bute to Lord Melcombe, Oct. 8th, 1761 (Adolphus' *History of England*, i., Appendix, p. 572).

² Add. MS. 32929, f. 115.

³ Add. MS. 32929, f. 262.

he regarded the continental war with little favour, and would be willing to abandon it if a favourable opportunity arose. During the reign of George II, the opposition had often denounced the sacrifice of English to German interests, and argued that, if a German elector was not king of England, English troops would not be seen fighting on the continent, and English money would not be spent in subsidising petty German princes. A few months after the accession of George III, a clever pamphlet had appeared, reiterating these views, and pointing out that, whereas the struggle with France on the sea, in America, and in India, served English interests, the continental war constituted a drain upon her resources, and gave no compensating advantage¹. These opinions were shared by Bute who had made no secret of his dislike of the sacrifice of English to German interests. If an abandonment of the continental struggle was likely to be popular in England, Bute would be ready to carry it out; but, if it would probably provoke the hostility of Pitt and the nation, he might prefer to sink his own opinions, and continue a policy of which he did not approve.

The German war remained, however, at present in the background, and men's minds were occupied with the Spanish question. In opposing Bute on that point, Newcastle was at a disadvantage; for the former was supported in his opinion by Grenville and Egremont. The arrival of a reassuring despatch from Lord Bristol on October 20th wrought no change in the design which Bute had formed. Newcastle learnt that, without his advice being sought, Egremont had been instructed by the king to order Lord Bristol to inform Wall, the Spanish minister, that England was willing to settle amicably her dispute

¹ Mauduit's *Considerations on the German War, 1760*.

with Spain, provided that the latter country "made it appear to the king that there was nothing offensive contained in the last treaty with Paris." This was to ask more than Wall could perform, and would oblige him, either to refuse the request, and thus confirm the worst suspicions of the English ministers, or reveal the truth that the family compact was expressly framed against the interests of England, and thus justify an immediate declaration of war. Bitterly as Newcastle might object to a policy which he regarded as unnecessarily provocative, he was powerless to prevent it. The instructions were discussed at a ministerial meeting on October 23rd, at which only Bute, Hardwicke, Newcastle, Egremont and Grenville were present¹. With no supporter but Hardwicke, Newcastle found himself outvoted². Three weeks before, Pitt, in a similar position, had preserved his dignity by resignation: Newcastle, to whom official life had become a second nature, clung to office. He protested against the administration pursuing a line of conduct which could only end in war; and, in answer to his protests, another meeting of ministers was summoned, which Lord Mansfield was asked to attend³. Bute was sufficiently powerful to be able to afford to indulge Newcastle. The second meeting was a useless formality, though it was perhaps then that Lord Hardwicke succeeded in obtaining a slight modification of the instructions⁴. As they were finally sent, Lord Bristol was instructed to press for a communication of the family compact; but, if the demand was refused, he was to be permitted to accept the Spanish king's solemn assurance as to the

¹ Add. MS. 32929, f. 421.

² Add. MS. 32929, f. 470, f. 472. Add. MS. 32930, f. 8.

³ Add. MS. 32930, f. 220.

⁴ *Ibid.*

innocent nature of the treaty, provided that the assurance was given in writing¹.

The die had been cast, and war between the two countries was now inevitable. The Spanish government might seek to gain time by delay; but, sooner or later, it would be compelled to throw off the mask, and avow its hostility to England. No fault can be found with Bute's policy, save that, by resorting to diplomacy, he gave to the enemy time in which to strengthen themselves for the coming struggle. He had prevailed against the opposition of Newcastle; and was ready to face parliament which had been summoned to meet early in November.

The parliamentary session passed off quietly. There was no organised opposition to the administration; and if the attitude adopted by Pitt was independent, it was at least not hostile. Even if he had chosen to lead an attack upon his former colleagues, his task would not have been easy. There was a lull in domestic politics. At the present day, no ministry could pass through a parliamentary session without bringing forward several contentious measures which would allow the opposition ample opportunity for criticism and condemnation. In the early years of the reign of George III, the servants of the crown were occupied more with administration than legislation, and were not supposed to have fallen short of their duty if they had failed to make important additions to the statute book. Conscious of his own unpopularity, Bute was not inclined to add to his burdens the weight of law-making, and if his administration lay open to attack, it was only in regard to the foreign policy which it pursued. Those who wished to oppose the government, and to discredit it in order to glorify Pitt, were prepared to ask for the documents, relating to the negotiations between

¹ *Parliamentary History*, xv. 1152—1157.

England and Spain, to be laid before the house of commons. The motives which inspired such a request were obvious. If it was complied with, the house would be given the opportunity of criticising the ministers for their opposition to Pitt who would be likely to seize the occasion to explain his conduct to a larger audience than a cabinet council. The danger was doubtless great, but the strength of the government, and the weakness of its opponents, lay in the extravagant nature of the demand; for Spain might justly be deeply offended if the confidential documents of an incomplete negotiation were published to the world. Though much might be urged in favour of the publication of the papers, though it might be said that, in refusing to reveal the information on which they had formed their opinions, the ministers admitted the weakness of their case, it cannot be said that they acted rashly in declining to accede to the request¹. The proposal for the Spanish papers to be submitted to the house of commons was moved on December 11th, and rejected without a division. Grenville spoke against the motion, "arguing that it was of the most dangerous consequence, whilst a negotiation might be depending, to call for papers, as it would tend to loosen all confidence from foreign powers." Pitt took part in the debate, speaking against the ministers who, however, carried the day².

The Spanish question was not the only danger which had threatened the administration: there was also the

¹ Grenville had at first been in favour of laying some of the papers before the house of commons, but this was strongly opposed by Bute. At a cabinet council on November 10th, the ministers were divided on the question; and it was arranged that Grenville should take the opinion of the principal men in the house of commons (Add. MS. 32930, f. 374, f. 423, f. 427, f. 431, f. 433; *Grenville Papers*, I. 416).

² Add. MS. 32932, f. 141; Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 88, ff.

question of the war in Germany. The foreign estimates had to be submitted to the house of commons; and Newcastle feared that they would be found not to include the necessary supplies for the continental war. He knew that Grenville was in favour of retrenchment, and suspected Bute of being of the same opinion. But he underrated Bute's wisdom and caution. However much the latter might sympathise with Grenville, he was not prepared to call up the world in arms against him. War with Spain had not yet been declared, and no sufficient excuse existed for abandoning the continent. To propose the withdrawal of the English troops from Germany would be to play into Pitt's hands, and give him a legitimate grievance against the government. Bute was willing to wait until he saw his way clearer; and Newcastle rejoiced to find that the war in Germany was still to continue¹. Yet the debate in the house of commons on the foreign estimates gave him food for reflection. If it was of little importance that Rigby and Delaval argued against the German war, it was of great moment that George Grenville displayed almost equal hostility. Though he deprecated the abandonment of the continent as involving the desertion of those we had promised to support, he argued against the utility of the war to England. "Did the war in Germany," he asked, "beat the French fleet? No, Sir Edward Hawke. Did the war in Germany take and preserve and recover Quebec? No, but fleets and armies." Proceeding in this vein, Grenville contrived, simultaneously, to support the administration and to justify the opposition².

This was bad enough, but worse was to come. When

¹ Add. MS. 32930, f. 374; Add. MS. 32931, f. 59, f. 147, f. 195, f. 197.

² Add. MS. 32932, f. 78; *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 71—79; *Walpole's Memoirs*, i. 79—83.

the debate was resumed on the following day, a new opponent of the German war arose. This was Colonel Barré, until then unknown in politics. The new speaker, however, displayed none of that timidity which is supposed to sit well upon a parliamentary novice. With incredible bad taste, smacking more of the camp than the town, he abused the late king for the favour he had shown to his German dominions; and described Pitt as an abandoned and profligate minister, ready to trim his sails to any favouring breeze. He roundly denounced the German war, though he was willing to allow it to continue for a year longer, not for any useful purpose that it served, but as an evil to be endured, a legacy from those who had betrayed the country in the past¹. His hearers were astounded by the audacity of the attack upon the popular hero; and Barré rose to parliamentary fame in one bound. Nor did he prevail by the power of mere vulgar abuse alone: his utterance was distinguished by genuine eloquence; and he showed himself endowed with gifts, destined to cause him to shine in debate. But his speech had an importance greater than can be attached to any display of mere oratory. He had been brought into parliament by Lord Shelburne² who was known to be in the confidence of Bute, and opposed to the German war³. Those who knew these facts might well invest Barré's speech with a significance which it did not appear on the surface to possess. It seemed not improbable that he had but voiced the opinions which Bute held and did not dare to avow; and, though the estimates were voted, and the German war continued, Newcastle lamented the

¹ Add. MS. 32932, f. 78, see also f. 109; Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 85—88.

² *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 170 (extract from the Mitchell MSS.).

³ Add. MS. 32931, f. 51.

attitude adopted by what he termed "the favourite part of the administration¹."

When parliament rose for the Christmas holidays, Bute could feel that he had tided over a difficult time successfully. He had refrained from giving Pitt an excuse for going into violent opposition, but, at the same time, he had encouraged the belief that England's interests were served, not by the struggle on the continent, but by the contest on the sea. He had averted the danger of the house of commons being constituted the judge between himself and Pitt on the Spanish question; and it is only fair to admit that it was largely by his skill and caution that a quiet session had been secured. But while parliament had been sitting, news had come from Lord Bristol which boded ill for the maintenance of peace between Spain and England. On November 14th, the ministers learnt that Wall had refused to answer the English inquiries. Lord Bristol was again instructed to press for an answer, but there could have been little hope that the Spanish government would retreat from the position it had taken up, and even Newcastle began to talk of preparing for a war which seemed inevitable². All hope vanished on Christmas Eve, when a further despatch from Bristol arrived in England. Wall had again refused either to communicate the treaty with France, or to give an assurance of its pacific character; and had informed the English ambassador that he could leave the country as soon as he liked. A few days before the arrival of Bristol's despatch, Fuentes, the Spanish ambassador in England, had presented a memorial, consisting, for the most part, of abuse of Pitt.

The attitude of Wall rendered anything but war

¹ Add. MS. 32932, f. 149; Walpole's *Letters*, v. 151—153.

² Add. MS. 32931, f. 51.

between the two countries impossible. He had thrown down the glove, and it was for the English ministers to pick it up. With the exception of Newcastle and Hardwicke, they were ready enough to accept the challenge thus thrown out. The cabinet was summoned to meet on December 26th¹. A draft of an answer to Fuentes' memorial, and of a declaration of war, were laid before the assembled ministers; and Newcastle, not allowing for the brevity of the interval between the arrival of Bristol's despatch and the meeting of the cabinet, was aggrieved because these documents had not been previously submitted to him. Even Pitt, he sorrowfully declared, had been wont to do as much². He suspected that everything had been arranged between the two secretaries of state and Grenville before the meeting³; and it is possible that his suspicions were well founded. But he was powerless to do anything but complain; and, by remaining in the administration, gave a tacit consent to a policy which he did not approve. On January 2nd, the cabinet decided to declare war, and, at another meeting a few days later, it was agreed to attack Havannah⁴.

The declaration of war with Spain is not an unimportant incident in the history of the administration which Bute controlled⁵. He had not been driven into hostilities against his will: conscious of the risk he ran, he had entered upon a course of diplomacy which had resulted in a breach between the two countries⁶. He had solved the

¹ Add. MS. 32932, f. 347.

² *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 102.

³ Add. MS. 32932, f. 362, f. 419.

⁴ Add. MS. 32933, f. 36; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 87.

⁵ Though Bute did not become first lord of the treasury until Newcastle left office in May 1762, he was the leading figure in the administration from the time of Pitt's resignation.

⁶ von Ruville's *William Pitt, Graf von Chatham*, III. 33—36.

Spanish question by war, and was now free to turn his attention to the struggle on the continent. The contest with Spain threatened to prove expensive, for it was likely that Portugal would be invaded; and Bute had encouraged the idea that England would come to the assistance of her ancient ally¹. The resources of the country might not be equal to the additional strain imposed upon it, unless some relief was given; and the way of obtaining that relief had already been shown. Bute told Newcastle that the German war must be abandoned², and supported his opinion by arguments at a cabinet council on January 6th³. Yet he did not desire to act with precipitation, and, though he might confide his opinion to his colleagues, he did not want to publish it to the world; and it was against his wishes that the Duke of Bedford introduced a motion against the German war in the house of lords⁴.

Indeed, the question was far more complicated than Bedford, perhaps, realised. England might justify the withdrawal of her troops from Germany by the plea of necessity, but her ally, Frederick the Great, of Prussia, left to bear the full brunt of the French attack, might regard such caution as perilously akin to treachery. Since the outbreak of the war, Frederick had been struggling against a coalition which threatened to overwhelm him. The limited resources of the Prussian state had been strained to breaking point, and the withdrawal of the English troops might well render it hopeless for him to continue to contend against difficulties which would have proved insuperable to most of his contemporaries. These considerations would have been sufficient

¹ Add. MS. 32932, f. 362, f. 419; Add. MS. 32933, f. 33.

² Add. MS. 32933, f. 33.

³ Add. MS. 32933, f. 179.

⁴ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 72; *Fitzmaurice's Life of Shelburne*, I. 127.

to make Bute pause; but the question was further complicated by the fact that Frederick the Great was in receipt of a subsidy from England. The treaty, under which the subsidy had been paid, had recently expired; and negotiations had already been begun for its renewal. It would be quite possible for England to withdraw her troops from Germany, and yet continue to render financial assistance to Prussia¹; and, after many conferences between Bute and the Prussian ministers in England, it had been arranged that, though the treaty should not be renewed between the two countries, Frederick should receive, at the hands of the English parliament, the same pecuniary assistance as had been granted to him in former years². It is clear, therefore, that Bute was pursuing a policy of extreme caution. Anxious as he might be to give England peace, willing as he was to withdraw from the continental struggle, he consented to continue the subsidy to Prussia, and seemed in favour of delaying, for a time at least, the abandonment of the German war. Frederick had every reason to be grateful to Pitt.

The situation was fundamentally changed, and Bute's policy with it, by the death of the czarina of Russia, Elizabeth, in January 1762, and the accession of Peter III. The new czar, though he was to reign but a few months, exercised a potent influence upon the politics of Europe, and the course of events in England. He was known to be an enthusiastic and fanatical admirer of Frederick the Great, and his accession rendered it highly probable that Prussia might find in her most dangerous antagonist her warmest and most valuable ally. When every prospect looked dark, and hope had nearly vanished, the un-

¹ Add. MS. 32929, f. 262.

² Add. MS. 32931, f. 165; Add. MS. 32932, f. 278; Add. MS. 32933, f. 106.

expected happened, and rewarded the man who had struggled against adversity. The brightness of the dawn was in proportion to the darkness of the night. An alliance between Russia and Prussia might quickly be brought about; and Frederick, who, but a few days before, had been in the depths of despair, could anticipate a triumphant issue to the severest struggle which his country had ever been called upon to undergo.

The death of the czarina could not be without influence upon the relations between England and Prussia. A state, which had been dependent upon English support for its very existence, was about to conclude a most valuable alliance; and Bute can hardly be blamed for thinking that the situation was sufficiently changed to justify a revision of the subsidy question. He had promised the subsidy at a time when Prussia was threatened by destruction. It was to be given, not to enable Prussia to pursue a policy of aggression and conquest, but to save her from extinction. The czarina's death had wrought a fundamental change, and whereas, before that event, Frederick had no choice, unless he was willing to confess himself defeated, but to continue the struggle against almost impossible odds, he had now the option of either prolonging the war with Russian assistance, or utilising his accession of strength to make peace with his enemies at the first favourable opportunity. It is not surprising that Bute favoured the adoption by Frederick of the latter alternative. If Prussia withdrew from the war, England would be relieved of a burden which she had borne for many years. The war had been fought for the possession of Silesia, and if Austria, intimidated by the change in Russian policy, was willing to allow Frederick to retain his ill-gotten conquest, the king of Prussia could lay down his arms, conscious that he had

preserved the integrity of his dominions, and proved his genius as a general. Such arguments, though they might appeal strongly to Bute and certain of his colleagues, carried little conviction to the mind of Frederick the Great. He had tasted the bitterness of defeat, and had known the agony of despair. He had seen his country laid waste, and his capital in the possession of the enemy. He had not provoked the contest which had come near to compassing his destruction; and, if he had been the first to take up arms, it had only been in self-defence against those who had conspired to overthrow him. Salvation had come at the moment when it was least expected, and he would have been more or less than human, and something very different from what he actually was, if he had not wished to revenge himself upon his foes, robbed of their hour of triumph. Allied with Russia, he might inflict upon the hated Austrian power a measure of the suffering his country had had to endure; and, in addition to regaining all that he had lost, acquire further conquests.

Bute found himself placed in an awkward position. He had no wish to furnish Frederick with the means of indefinitely prolonging the war; and yet, if the promised subsidy was withheld, he would lay himself open to the charge of a breach of faith. It was obvious that English interests would not be served by the annihilation of the Austrian power; and it would appear that the altered circumstances, if they did not permit of the withholding of the subsidy, at least justified the imposition of conditions for its payment. Bute was determined that if Frederick received money from England, it should not be used to prolong war, but to facilitate the conclusion of peace. He instructed Mitchell, the English ambassador at Berlin, to inform the Prussian king that the English

government regarded the death of the czarina as favouring a general pacification, and did not intend to utilise it to continue the war¹. This was a hint which Frederick did not wish to take. He was not ready to sacrifice the opportunity which chance had given him, and turned a deaf ear to the blandishments of Bute. In a letter to George III, which reached its destination towards the end of February, he talked of prolonging the war, never so much as hinted at peace, and declared that Prussia and England had now an opportunity, which might never occur again, of crushing the enemies who had threatened their safety. In a private letter which, unfortunately for the writer, was intercepted and seen by those for whom it was not intended, he spoke disparagingly of the English ministers, and suggested Bedlam as a suitable refuge for them².

The most charitable and generous of men are not apt to be prejudiced in favour of those who think meanly of their intelligence; and the unlucky reference to Bedlam would not plead in Frederick's favour with Bute. Nor would the conduct of the Prussian ministers in England. As if demanding the payment of a debt, rather than asking for a gift, they told Bute "that, as their master was willing to take the subsidy, £670,000, in the way which it had been offered to him, they hoped and expected that it would be immediately voted. They must have an *oui* or a *non*³." They received their answer a few days later, being told by Bute that the subsidy would be paid directly their master informed the English government of the action he proposed to take in regard to a general pacification. "*Le roi*," wrote the secretary of state, "*souhaiteroit que le secours, qu'il voudroit prêter*

¹ Add. MS. 32934, f. 195.

² Add. MS. 32935, f. 9.

³ Add. MS. 32935, f. 9.

à ce prince, dut plutôt aider à la conclusion de la paix qu'à la continuation de la guerre¹."

The minatory attitude of the Prussian ministers must have strengthened Bute in his resolution not to pay the subsidy unless Frederick showed greater compliance with the wishes of the English administration. Even Newcastle began to waver in his support of Prussia, and might have consented to refuse the subsidy, if it had not been for the influence of Lord Hardwicke². Ugly rumours began to circulate that Russia and Prussia were about to begin a war upon Denmark³, and news arrived from St Petersburg that the new czar was fanatically in favour of Frederick the Great. The hopes of those who had believed in the possibility of winning Russia to the side of England vanished in the light of this intelligence⁴. Frederick himself fanned the flame by declaring, in a letter to George III, that the war would not end until the empress had begun to fear for the safety of her hereditary dominions⁵. The English answer could no longer be delayed, and Bute determined to strike. On April 12th, he informed Newcastle that he had made up his mind to refuse the subsidy⁶; and the question was finally settled at a cabinet meeting on April 30th. Only Newcastle, Hardwicke, and Devonshire spoke in favour of continuing

¹ Adolphus' *History of England*, I., Appendix, pp. 577—578.

² On February 25, 1762, in a letter to Hardwicke, Newcastle remarks, "If we could, with honor and safety, save £670,000, it would be a great thing for us, and perhaps prevent great difficulties at the end of the year." In his reply Hardwicke points out that he does not think that "this subsidy can finally be refused, consistently with the king's honour"; and Newcastle confesses himself convinced. Add. MS. 32935, f. 74, f. 76, f. 89. See also f. 9.

³ Add. MS. 32936, f. 443, f. 453.

⁴ *Grenville Papers*, I. 420—422.

⁵ Adolphus' *History of England*, I., Appendix, pp. 578—579.

⁶ Add. MS. 32937, f. 85.

the payment; Bute, Egremont, Grenville, the lord chancellor, and Lord Ligonier all argued for refusing it, and they carried the day. Mansfield, with characteristic caution, remained silent. Newcastle and his followers found themselves outvoted; and it was decided to withhold financial assistance from Prussia¹.

For his conduct in regard to this question, Bute has often been charged with bad faith. He stands accused of having broken a pledge which he had given, of having encouraged the king of Prussia to believe that he would receive the subsidy, and then withholding it. The accusation is true, but it is not just. The subsidy had been promised at a time when Frederick seemed at the end of his resources. Surrounded by enemies, he could not hope for peace unless he was willing to sacrifice his legitimate ambition, and allow Prussia to be hurled from the height to which he and his ancestors had raised it. If Bute and his colleagues had refused to pay the subsidy unless Frederick, when hard pressed on all sides, had consented to make peace, they would stand guilty of having attempted to force an ally to submit to terms humiliating to himself and destructive to his country. But this they did not do. It was only after the change in the policy of the Russian government had rescued Frederick from the slough of despond, and enabled him, either to continue the war with every hope of success, or conclude an honourable peace with his enemies, that Bute refused to pay the subsidy unless Frederick showed himself willing to bring the war to a conclusion. This is the degree of his iniquity. Misunderstanding and false suspicion existed on both sides; but the English minister can hardly be blamed for seizing what he thought to be a favourable opportunity of

¹ Add. MS. 32937, f. 450; Add. MS. 32938, f. 26, f. 50, f. 239; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 75—77.

refusing to assist Frederick to prolong the contest in order to satisfy the ambition of Prussia. The subsidy, it is true, had been pledged, but the circumstances had changed; and to demand the fulfilment of a promise, when the circumstances, in which it had been made, had totally altered, was rather to adhere to the letter of the bond than to fulfil the spirit.

The settlement of the subsidy question left Bute free to deal with affairs in Germany. Since the outbreak of war with Spain, he had made no secret of his opinion on that question, and, early in April, had told Newcastle that he was determined to withdraw the English troops from the continent¹. But to put such a policy into practice would be to court a danger which might imperil the safety of the administration. Pitt, who would be certain to disapprove of the refusal of the Prussian subsidy, might be driven into violent hostility to the government if the continental war was abandoned by England. If the English troops were withdrawn at the same time that the subsidy was withheld, the impression might be given that Bute was actuated, not by a desire to promote the interests of England, but by animosity against the king of Prussia. Nor could the measure be now justified on the plea of financial necessity; for, against the additional expenditure due to the war with Spain, must be set the economy effected by the refusal of the subsidy. Bute hesitated to adopt a policy which would evoke the opposition of Pitt, and for which excuse was lacking. He sought safety in compromise. If it was too dangerous to abandon the German war altogether, it was possible to reduce the expenditure upon it. Such a policy would be far less open to criticism, for it might be defended as an attempt to secure both efficiency and economy; and Bute, who

¹ Add. MS. 32937, f. 85.

realised the insecurity of his own position, and always preferred the path of safety, determined to adopt it. When, therefore, Newcastle asked that the house of commons should be requested to vote two million pounds, one half of which was to be allotted to the assistance of Portugal, and the remainder devoted to the war in Germany, he was informed that a vote of one million would be sufficient for both purposes¹. The king had declared his approval of this policy of economy²; and Newcastle discovered the majority of his colleagues ranged against him. It was in vain that Lord Barrington, the chancellor of the exchequer, endeavoured to convince Grenville that a vote of one million would not be sufficient³. It was in vain that Lord Mansfield, who on this point agreed with Newcastle, argued with Bute⁴. The decree had gone forth, and there was to be no drawing back.

The time had come for Newcastle to retire from the administration. His influence had been waning ever since the accession of George III. No longer able to dispense patronage as had been his wont, he had seen his powers

¹ Dr von Ruville states that Newcastle included the Prussian subsidy in the sum of two million pounds which he demanded (*William Pitt, Graf von Chatham*, III. 64). It appears, however, that Newcastle had made up his mind to the refusal of the Prussian subsidy, and wished to utilise the saving thus effected by devoting more money to the German war. On May 2nd, in a letter to Lord Mansfield, he says, "I have desired my Lord Barrington to attend you, and he will explain the whole, the necessity of having another million, that is one million for Portugal and Spain (the new war) and the usual million vote of credit; for though there will be a saving by their refusal of the Prussian subsidy, that does not give the treasury any money, and if some method is not found to raise a sum a little exceeding that subsidy, for our new additional expence from our war with Spain, and the defence of Portugal, we can't go on." Add. MS. 32938, f. 18.

² *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 108—109.

³ Add. MS. 32938, f. 12.

⁴ Add. MS. 32938, f. 47.

restricted and curtailed, and authority passing to those who enjoyed the support of the court. He had submitted to the declaration of war upon Spain, and to the refusal of the Prussian subsidy; but the breaking point had now been reached. He had always been jealous of any interference in the treasury which he had come to regard as his own preserve; and, fearing that a breach had been made in the very citadel of his power, he determined upon resignation. On May 7th he informed Bute that he did not intend to remain in office, thwarting the measures adopted by the majority of his colleagues, and therefore proposed to direct Barrington to move the vote for one million and no more¹. Five days later the vote was carried in the house of commons²; and Newcastle's fate was sealed. On May 14th he visited the king, who received him with scant courtesy³; and on May 24th formally resigned his office. Thus fell one of the most typical whigs of the eighteenth century. If he was not a great statesman, he had at least been a fairly successful one; and, though revelling in petty details and the sordid side of politics, was not the absolutely worthless creature he has been represented. A few days before he resigned, he informed Lord Rockingham of the step he was about to take, and then added, characteristically enough, "If you or the marchioness have any jobs which I can do, before I go out, let me know them immediately⁴." His exit was not destitute of a certain dignity. He refused the pension which the king pressed upon him; and since he had considerably reduced his own fortune in the service of the state, he might well have availed himself of the royal bounty. Grown grey in public life, and defeated by his

¹ Add. MS. 32938, f. 105.

² Add. MS. 32938, f. 185; Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 127—132.

³ Add. MS. 32938, f. 262.

⁴ Add. MS. 32938, f. 260.

youthful sovereign, Newcastle might have taken the opportunity of withdrawing from the parliamentary struggle, and enjoying his well earned leisure; and it is to his credit that, when there was little to hope for, he continued to fight for the principles which he had professed when in power.

There can be little doubt that Bute was willing to rid himself of Newcastle, and intended to drive him into resignation. He had always despised the old duke; and, now that the latter had served his turn, was prepared to throw him over. The ground of attack had been skilfully chosen. If Newcastle had resigned rather than sanction the withdrawal of the troops from Germany, he might have posed as a patriot, and been welcomed as an ally by Pitt¹; but Bute had avoided this danger by allowing the war to continue while reducing the expenditure. Yet he could not have been unmindful of the possibility of an alliance between Pitt and Newcastle. To Mansfield and Devonshire he might deride the prospect of Newcastle proving a danger to the administration, and, with a cynical appreciation of the motive force in eighteenth century politics, talk of "the loaves and fishes," and declare that "a young king would find friends²"; but this did not prevent both him and his master attempting to gain a pledge from Newcastle that he would continue to support the government³. The duke was not to be snared, and refused to limit his freedom of action by giving a promise of support, though he declared that, whether he was in or out of office, he would always endeavour to facilitate the conclusion of peace⁴.

¹ Newcastle believed that Bute suspected him of championing the war in Germany for the purpose of winning Pitt's support. Add. MS. 32937, f. 85.

² Add. MS. 32938, f. 262.

³ Add. MS. 32938, f. 262, f. 381: *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 114—115.

⁴ Add. MS. 32938, f. 105.

The fall of Newcastle necessitated a reorganisation of the administration. It was a foregone conclusion that Bute would succeed to the office of first lord of the treasury, and Grenville become secretary of state. The latter could claim the promotion which he had refused a few months earlier; but, though the king and Bute were willing to have Grenville as secretary of state, it was only on the condition that his brother-in-law, Lord Egremont, should vacate the office he then held. They foresaw that two secretaries of state, closely connected by marriage, might combine to thwart the will of the first minister; and, as Grenville and Egremont in the negotiation with France, which had already begun, displayed an inclination to adopt a different line of action from that favoured by Bute¹, the suspicion was not devoid of foundation.

Bute was probably right in thinking that progress would be facilitated, and the chance of friction diminished, if Lord Egremont could be removed from the inner cabinet; and it was suggested that he should resign the secretaryship of state, and take the office of lord lieutenant of Ireland. It is possible that Lord Halifax was intended to take his place in the cabinet²; but the scheme was frustrated by the opposition of Grenville. The man who had refused promotion, rather than succeed one brother-in-law, was not likely to allow another to be sacrificed; and the king and Bute had to abandon their plan. When, however, Lord Anson, the first lord of the admiralty, died in the following June, his office, which carried with it a seat in the inner cabinet³, was given to Lord Halifax. The latter had little to recommend him, but Sir Francis Dashwood, who succeeded Barrington as

¹ Add. MS. 32935, f. 149.

² Add. MS. 32938, f. 381.

³ Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 255, note 3.

chancellor of the exchequer, had certainly less. In a by no means puritanical age, he was notorious for his profligacy ; and it was reserved for a king, who honourably distinguished himself from his predecessors by the purity of his private life, to choose a chancellor of the exchequer from among the members of a hell-fire club. But it was not Dashwood's immorality so much as his ignorance of finance that unfitted him for the office for which he had been selected. Probably that ignorance has been exaggerated by his enemies ; but it stands on record that the cyder tax, imposed in 1763, owed its origin to the fact that the chancellor of the exchequer was incapable of understanding the details of a linen tax sufficiently to explain them to the house of commons¹.

The reconstruction of the administration may be said to mark the triumph of the crown. In less than two years, Newcastle, in spite of his political influence, and Pitt, in spite of his popularity, had been driven from office ; and Bute had risen from groom of the stole to be first lord of the treasury. He had gathered new men around him, and rid the king of those who had tyrannised over his grandfather, and had hoped to tyrannise over him. Newcastle, Hardwicke² and Legge were no longer the advisers of the crown ; and it had been made abundantly clear that promotion came from the court, and was not to be won by service, however faithful, to the whig party. Yet, though the oligarchy had been overthrown, the battle was not yet over ; and, if much had been gained, much had been also lost. In the struggle with the whigs, the ground had been prepared for the growth of an opposition party which might endanger the success of

¹ Add. MS. 32948, f. 92 ; Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 186.

² Hardwicke ceased to attend cabinet councils when Newcastle resigned.

the king's designs. The nation, which had not loved Newcastle, had learnt to hate Bute; and the minister's unpopularity was reflected upon the king. The greatest and most difficult task of all had still to be accomplished—the conclusion of peace with France. It had been with the object of bringing the war to a conclusion that Bute had taken upon himself so many burdens; and the work lay still unfinished. In the face of a hostile nation always ready to judge him at his worst, with colleagues who showed themselves more ready to criticise than to obey, he embarked upon the undertaking before which all his other work seems trivial and merely preparatory.

It will be remembered that Stanley was recalled from France in September 1761; and the attempt to bring the war to an end abandoned for the moment. But the ministers were not prepared to relinquish all hope of peace; and were ready to renew the negotiations at the first favourable opportunity¹. In December, 1761, a kinsman of Choiseul chanced to be in England, and had interviews with the secretaries of state and also with Newcastle, who remarked that his visitor "must be duller than generally Frenchmen are, if he don't understand us²." The ground for future action thus prepared, de Brielle, the Sardinian ambassador at Paris, was commissioned, apparently soon after the above conversation, to inform Choiseul that the English ministers were willing to discuss terms of peace with France³. Choiseul received this communication with caution, and his answer disappointed those who had built their hopes on his pacific

¹ Add. MS. 32931, f. 51. Corbett's *England in the Seven Years' War*, II. 285. See the same work for a valuable and interesting account of the negotiations with France.

² Add. MS. 32931, f. 388.

³ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 97—99.

inclinations¹. He complained that the English overtures were too vague; and stated that France could not move in the matter without Spain. He suggested that the English ministers should send a secret envoy to France, who should carry on, simultaneously, negotiations with both France and Spain; or that they should provide the Count de Viry with a memoir of the terms of peace they were willing to grant, and receive in return the French proposals².

To despatch a secret envoy to negotiate with Choiseul might doubtless have been the most effective means of bringing about a good understanding between the two countries, but circumstances rendered it impossible³; and the other alternative stated by Choiseul was adopted. Bute sketched out to Viry the terms he would be willing to offer⁴. They were generous enough, and lay open to attack for yielding too much. Bute, however, had spoken as a private man: it was Egremont who was entrusted with the task of communicating in writing to the Count de Viry the terms approved by the English ministers. His letter was submitted to those of his colleagues acquainted with the secret⁵. It was agreed to allow the French the right of fishing in the gulf of St Lawrence and off Newfoundland, and they were to be permitted to hold the islands of St Pierre and Miquelon. Goree was

¹ *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 99—100; Add. MS. 32935, f. 169, f. 172.

² *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 97—99; Add. MS. 32934, f. 121.

³ Choiseul had stipulated that, if an envoy was sent to France, he must be prepared to deal with Spain through the French government; and Viry had informed Bute that Choiseul was not likely to give way on that point. Bute himself was in favour of a separate negotiation with Spain; but even had he been willing to make this concession to France, he would probably have been obliged to face the opposition of Egremont and Grenville. Add. MS. 32935, f. 249.

⁴ Add. MS. 32935, f. 249.

⁵ Add. MS. 32936, f. 9.

also to be surrendered to France; and it was stipulated that in Germany neither power was to continue to aid her allies after the conclusion of peace, except by granting financial assistance¹.

Up to this point the negotiation with France had been kept a profound secret. Only a few ministers knew what was going on, and the question had never been discussed at a full cabinet council². Newcastle and Hardwicke, as earnest advocates of peace, had been allowed to know all, and had played an active part in the secret councils which met to debate the question; but the Duke of Bedford had been kept in the dark³, and Lord Mansfield and the Duke of Cumberland were only told a part of the truth⁴. The time had now come to throw off the mask. The cabinet council met on March 29th, 1762, and, as though no previous steps had been taken, agreed to renew the negotiation with France⁵. The secretary of state was instructed to write to the Duc de Choiseul suggesting that the two countries should exchange ministers, and that the last memorial of each country, in the negotiations which had been broken off in the previous September, should be taken as the base of the discussion. At a later meeting a clause was added expressing the desire of the English government to make a similar communication to Spain⁶. Choiseul returned a favourable reply⁷. Though he again stated that France could not make peace without Spain, he

¹ Add. MS. 32936, f. 1.

² Add. MS. 32935, f. 330.

³ Add. MS. 32936, f. 9.

⁴ Add. MS. 32935, f. 390; Add. MS. 32936, f. 186.

⁵ Hist. MSS. Comm. Weston Underwood MSS., p. 449.

⁶ The idea had been to make a separate offer to Spain, but Egremont, who had originally been in favour of this proposal, changed his mind and the project was abandoned. Hist. MSS. Comm. Weston Underwood MSS., p. 449; Add. MS. 32936, f. 234, f. 418, f. 420.

⁷ Add. MS. 32937, f. 111.

seemed hopeful that the latter country would be willing to come to terms. In addition to what England had agreed to surrender by her last memorial in the previous negotiation, Choiseul demanded the cession of Martinique which had only recently been conquered. The loss of that island had been a serious blow to the French power in the West Indies and a corresponding gain to England; and, if Choiseul was unwilling to submit to such a serious loss, the English ministers might legitimately refuse to surrender so important a conquest.

The cabinet met on April 23rd to frame a reply to Choiseul's letter. The discussion, as might be expected, centred round the demand for the cession of Martinique. If the ministers consented to surrender the island, they might lay themselves open to the charge of pusillanimity, and encourage the French government to press for further concessions; and it was agreed that Martinique could only be given back to the French if England was allowed to retain either Guadeloupe or Louisiana¹. This decision was arrived at against the will of Newcastle² who feared that Choiseul might regard the price demanded for Martinique as excessive. His mortification, however, was of short duration, for, when the cabinet met again to come to a final decision, Bute had changed his mind, and was in sympathy with him. Bute argued that to ask for Guadeloupe or Louisiana in return for Martinique was to ask too much, that France would never agree to such terms; and he proposed that the administration should agree to surrender Martinique in return for the cession of the neutral islands³ and Grenada⁴. In making this proposal, Bute could feel sure of the support of Newcastle,

¹ Add. MS. 32937, f. 341.

² Add. MS. 32937, f. 324, f. 349.

³ Tobago, St Lucia, Dominica, and St Vincent.

⁴ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 75—77.

Hardwicke, and Devonshire, and of the opposition of Grenville and Egremont. Even Bedford, the fanatical lover of peace, thought that the offer erred on the side of generosity¹. But Bute was able to prevail by the assistance of those who, in their anxiety for peace, feared to take any step which might provoke Choiseul to break off the negotiation; and his proposal was agreed to by the cabinet when it met on April 20th², and embodied in a despatch dated the day following³.

This was the last communication to France which Newcastle was to assist in framing. A few days after he had lent his support to Bute against Grenville, the blow fell which compelled him to abandon office. He had been the champion of peace as long as he had remained a member of the ministry; and, before many months had passed, he was to suffer for the part he had played. His withdrawal from the administration left Bute far more dependent upon the support of Grenville and Egremont; and accentuated the difficulties of his task. Not until he had concluded peace with France could he lay down the burden of office, of which he would fain be rid; and, though nearing the goal of his ambition, could not yet count with confidence upon success. Much might happen to check and hinder him in his course. Choiseul might prove himself unconciliatory; and Bute's attempts to placate him by concessions might be thwarted by the opposition of the two secretaries of state. The outlook was dark and stormy; and the inexperienced minister might well be alarmed at the magnitude of the work he had undertaken.

Choiseul's answer to the English terms arrived early

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 77, 78.

² *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 75—77. It is probable that Grenville was absent from this cabinet meeting. *Grenville Papers*, I. 450.

³ Add. MS. 32938, f. 3.

in June; but the cabinet did not meet until June 21st¹. Accepting all that had been conceded, Choiseul refused to surrender St Lucia, one of the neutral islands². This new demand on the part of the French government might easily endanger the success of the negotiations. The compensation for the surrender of Martinique had only been fixed after some hesitation, and had been due to Bute supported by Newcastle and his friends. The ministers might well hesitate to reduce the compensation, for what guarantee was there that Choiseul would not proceed to demand still further concessions. Amongst those summoned to the cabinet meeting on June 21st were Lord Melcombe and Lord Mansfield³. The French proposals were not favourably received by the assembled ministers. The Duke of Bedford, true to the policy which he had always pursued, advocated the surrender of St Lucia, but found himself unsupported by his colleagues. Lord Egremont declared the answer of the French court to be unreasonable and captious; and his opinion was echoed by Lord Mansfield. No record survives of an expression of opinion by Grenville on this occasion; but it is certain that he was in favour of retaining St Lucia⁴. Lord Melcombe, remarking with some spirit that "he might be beaten into a peace but would not be kicked into it," argued that the limit of concession had been reached when it had been agreed to surrender Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Mariegalante to France. Bute delivered himself with caution and reserve. He agreed that a firm but polite answer should be given, but argued "that if there was any one demand, when France had reduced it to that point, then it would be fit to determine

¹ Add. MS. 32939, f. 264; Add. MS. 32940, f. 6.

² Add. MS. 32939, f. 264.

³ Add. MS. 32940, f. 24.

⁴ *Grenville Papers*, i. 450.

whether the council would advise his Majesty to continue the war for that one object, and then, and not till then, he would state the powers and faculty of this country for the consideration of that question¹." The meeting adjourned to re-assemble three days later²; but, from the surviving records, it is abundantly clear that the general opinion of the ministers was against any further concessions to France³.

The outlook was not hopeful. For some weeks the English government refused to give way on the point in dispute, but failed to persuade Choiseul to withdraw his demand⁴. Nor was the situation bettered by the attitude taken up by Spain. Acting on Choiseul's advice, the administration had made direct overtures for peace to that country⁵, and an answer arrived early in July⁶. It gave little satisfaction. The reply of the Spanish government was considered to be insolent and overbearing; and thus from both France and Spain there seemed little to expect in the way of concession or compromise. The situation was critical in the extreme. Spain had returned an answer which might justly be considered as insolent; and Choiseul insisted upon a demand which the English ministers were not inclined to fulfil. Bute began to see the hope of peace vanishing before his eyes; and determined that the time had come to give way. Peace with France and Spain could only be bought at a price, and St Lucia was the price that would have to be paid⁷.

¹ Add. MS. 34713, f. 106.

² Add. MS. 32940, f. 112.

³ In conversation with Lord Mansfield, Newcastle learnt "that there was not at present the least probability of peace; that the answers from France were all verbiage, full of chichane, and even departed or chichaned upon points which had been before agreed to." *Ibid*.

⁴ Add. MS. 32941, f. 18.

⁵ Add. MS. 32938, f. 304.

⁶ *Grenville Papers*, i. 462, 463.

⁷ *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 88—91.

When a courier arrived on July 24th, bringing letters from Choiseul, Bute is reported to have declared that peace was made¹. The French terms were reported to be most favourable², and the cabinet was summoned to meet on July 26th.

It might be thought, judging by the favourable estimate Bute had formed of Choiseul's offer, that the latter had receded from his position, and agreed to the English demands. This was not the case. While asking that the two courts should exchange representatives, he still insisted upon the surrender of St Lucia. But, and this was the secret of Bute's satisfaction, he had changed his attitude towards Spain. Up to this time Choiseul had always asserted that France could never make peace without Spain; but now, according to Bute, he appeared less solicitous of the interests of the ally of France; and had declared that, if Spain refused to make peace, she must submit to coercion at the hands of England³. Bute seemed to see light where all before had been darkness; and, when he met the ministers in council on July 26th, he must have thought himself a bearer of good tidings. The time had come when it was possible to separate the two Bourbon countries; and the opportunity must not be lost. Peace with France could be won by the cession of St Lucia; and then Spain, deprived of its powerful ally, would lie at the mercy of England. He therefore pressed his colleagues to neglect the question of Spain for the moment, and, taking the advantage which fate had given them, accept the French proposals. His arguments deservedly encountered opposition. Their validity depended upon the supposition that Choiseul, whatever he might

¹ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, i. 69.

² *Ibid.*; Add. MS. 32941, f. 48.

³ Add. MS. 32941, f. 84.

have said, would be willing, or even able, to leave Spain to be crushed by the power of England. There was little evidence for this belief. The family compact had but recently been made, and it was extremely unlikely that France would cynically break her faith so solemnly pledged. Spain had taken up arms, confident of the support of France; and, if now deserted by her ally, and left alone to face the attack of England, her doom was sealed. When Bute unfolded his plan to the cabinet, he found not a single supporter. More lonely than Pitt on a former occasion, he stood absolutely alone. He was fiercely assaulted on all sides; and the old lord president, Granville, with some of the fire of his youth, bitterly accused him of being the dupe of France; and declared that he himself would never agree to a peace in which Spain was not included¹.

No decision was come to, and a further meeting was held two days later. Bute had the wisdom to see that he could never carry his original proposal; and, when the ministers assembled on July 28th, he proposed that the royal consent should be given to the French propositions,

¹ Bute's disappointment can be gauged from a letter which he wrote to Egremont after the cabinet council on July 26th: "I am not ashamed," he wrote, "to own that I write this letter with a heavy heart, convinced in my own mind of two important truths—the one that peace was in our power, the other that we are about to lose an opportunity we shall scarce recover again. I am satisfied the French are as sick of the war as we could be, and that by management everything we desired relative to Spain would have come about, whereas now we expect in vain, that France should thus openly abandon her ally, a different thing from doing it in a course of negotiation. Possessing these ideas, you will not be surprised, my dear Lord, if the situation I have just been in, single and alone, alarms me; I feel most sensibly that I am, from the king's known goodness to me, to stand at mark for the long train of calamities that the continuation of this war brings in my view." Add. MS. 36797, f. 6.

that the Duke of Bedford should be sent to France, and that the latter country should endeavour to persuade Spain to be a party to the treaty; but, if her efforts failed to be successful, she should pledge herself not to assist Spain in the war with England¹. This was agreed to by all the ministers present. The administration had thus consented to restore St Lucia, and this marks the triumph of Bute over George Grenville. On the other hand, Bute had tasted the bitterness of defeat. He had stood alone in the cabinet, opposed by those who, if it had not been for him, would have never been in a position to thwart him. He had been obliged to modify his policy in regard to Spain, and to assent to a demand being made of France which could not be fulfilled without a violation of the family compact. At this point in the negotiation the deciding word lay with Spain: it rested with her either to prolong or conclude the war. If she maintained a truculent and defiant attitude, Choiseul would be placed between the horns of a dilemma, compelled either to continue a disastrous war, or break faith with an ally. It was to Choiseul's interest, having secured possession of St Lucia, to win over the Spanish government to the side of peace. Whether the defiant attitude of Spain had been adopted with that end in view or not, it had at least served the purpose of rendering England more ready to comply with the demands of France. It was known in London by the middle of August that Choiseul had agreed to the English terms, and was about to send a messenger to Spain to exhort that country to peace². The exhortations of Choiseul were not without effect; before the end of the month a favourable answer had come from Spain,

¹ For these two cabinet meetings, see Add. MS. 33000, f. 95; Add. MS. 32941, f. 68, f. 185, f. 203; Add. MS. 34713, f. 110.

² Add. MS. 32941, f. 249.

and it had been arranged that Grimaldi should be given full powers to treat with the Duke of Bedford¹.

A difficult crisis had been tided over; and nothing more remained to be done but despatch the representatives of the respective countries. The Duke of Bedford left for France early in September; and, on the twelfth day of the same month, the Duc de Nivernois, the accredited agent of the French government, arrived in England². The appointment of the Duke of Bedford was open to adverse criticism. One so biassed in favour of peace might easily concede too much to the enemy. Nor was he by disposition or temperament suited for the delicate work of diplomacy. Hardwicke, who knew him well, and who had sat with him at many cabinet councils, thought that, despite his passion for peace, no man was more likely to take offence on some immaterial point, and break off the negotiation in a moment of passion. "In another light," wrote Hardwicke, "no man is more likely to take a disgust at instructions that may be sent to him; or at the ministers differing in opinion from him; or not agreeing to everything his Grace shall propose. I am sure I should not wish to be the secretary of state to have the correspondence with him. In that case, instead of attaching the Duke of Bedford to Lord Bute, the very reverse may happen; and it may make an eternal breach between them³." It is difficult to realise that these words were written a month before Bedford left England; for few prophecies have been so literally fulfilled.

It is probable that Bute was responsible for the appointment of Bedford. Neither of the secretaries of state had any confidence in him; and it was re-

¹ Add. MS. 32942, f. 86, f. 91, f. 122, f. 142, f. 145.

² Add. MS. 32942, f. 240.

³ Add. MS. 32941, f. 122.

ported that Egremont hated him¹. They were not long in giving a practical illustration of their hostility. Shortly after Bedford had left England, his independent authority was limited by the ministers who decided that the preliminaries of peace must be approved by the king before being signed². The Duke, naturally enough, resented this restriction of his authority; nor was he pacified by being told that the action of the ministers had been inspired by a desire to lighten the weight of his responsibility³. He suspected Egremont and Grenville as the authors of the unfriendly act, and thought that they had either prevailed against Bute, or won him over to their way of thinking⁴. It was not a happy beginning, and the Duke of Bedford was to learn how many are the difficulties which beset the path of a diplomatist. However anxious Choiseul might be for peace, he was not prepared for an unconditional surrender; and even Bedford, the most yielding of diplomatists, was dissatisfied with the terms offered by the French court⁵. Choiseul afterwards consented to abandon the demands to which Bedford took objection⁶; and the ultimatum was despatched to England. The terms, thus offered, were in many points identical with the preliminaries of peace approved by parliament. The territory of the Prussian king was to be evacuated by the French who were to have the right of fishing in the gulf of St Lawrence and off Newfoundland, and to be given the islands of St Pierre and Miquelon. But in two particulars there was a fundamental difference between these terms and the preliminaries. There was no guarantee that the French fishing boats would keep at a certain distance from the English coasts; and there was no

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 128.

² *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁵ *Hist. MSS. Comm.* Weston Underwood MSS., p. 344.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

compensation offered for the surrender of the important possession of Havannah recently conquered from Spain¹.

Bute professed himself satisfied with the terms offered by Choiseul; and found himself, in consequence, in direct conflict with his two secretaries of state. Grenville declared that he would never sign a peace which did not allow of compensation being given for the surrender of Havannah; and Lord Egremont was of the same opinion². The standard of revolt was raised within the administration; and Grenville talked of summoning Newcastle, Devonshire, and Hardwicke to attend the cabinet council³. The situation was threatening in the extreme. As first minister, Bute could hardly submit to the dictation of his colleagues. He had already once suffered defeat at the hands of his subordinates; and, if he was to allow himself to be outvoted again, he might lose all influence in the administration. Yet his opponents were stronger than he was. In asking compensation for the restoration of Havannah, they were certain of popular support which, apart from everything else, would be readily given to the men who dared to stand up against the hated favourite. Detested by the nation and opposed by his colleagues, Bute seemed about to lose the fruits of all his labours: the olive branch extended by Choiseul threatened to prove a sword of division and destruction.

At this crisis of his fortunes, he displayed a capacity for decisive action, with which he is not often credited. A meeting of the cabinet had been fixed for October 4th;

¹ Add. MS. 32943, f. 28. The French ultimatum arrived in England on September 28th: the fall of Havannah was known the day following. See Add. MS. 32943, f. 28, note by Newcastle; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 130, 131.

² *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 128—132; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 125—131.

³ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 128—132.

and, before that day, the two secretaries of state had to be schooled into submission. The royal authority was to be used to overawe the two unruly ministers. "The king," said Bute to Rigby, "would be obeyed, and would talk to his two secretaries upon their obedience¹." But, though harangued by their sovereign, neither Grenville nor Egremont would abandon their convictions². They persisted in their demand that compensation should be exacted for the surrender of Havannah; and would not be likely to give way, strengthened by the knowledge that not a single councillor was willing to support Bute³. The king had failed to bend his secretaries to his will; and Bute had no other means of coercion. He was quite prepared to demand compensation for Havannah⁴; but shrank from doing so at the dictation of his colleagues. If he was to make a concession, he must, at the same time, give a forcible illustration of his predominance; for, as Fox truly remarked, "it was impossible for Lord Bute to hold it, when he could not govern his own people⁵." Time was necessary for him in which to execute such a project; and it was essential to avoid affording Grenville and Egremont an opportunity of voicing their opinions and leading the attack upon the first minister. This was easily done: the cabinet council, which had been summoned for October 4th, never met⁶.

The rock of offence was George Grenville. Since the fall of Newcastle, he had led the opposition in the cabinet⁷.

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 128.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 131—133.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* On September 30th the king told Cumberland that he was for some equivalent for Havannah. Add. MS. 32943, f. 28.

⁵ Add. MS. 32943, f. 28.

⁶ On October 10th Lord Halifax informed Newcastle that there had not been a council for three weeks. Add. MS. 32943, f. 140.

⁷ On July 26th, 1762, Bute wrote, "I scorn to dwell on, nor will I

Far abler than his brother-in-law, Egremont, he was, in consequence, the more dangerous; and it was supposed to be due to his influence that Egremont had adopted a hostile attitude towards the Duke of Bedford¹. By his action in the Havannah question, Grenville had filled up the cup of his iniquity; and Bute determined to deprive him of the secretaryship of state and of the management of the house of commons. Grenville's successor was to be Henry Fox. By this arrangement, Bute hoped to strengthen his position in the cabinet, and facilitate the conclusion of peace. Fox was not chosen at random. That daring politician was known not to be burdened with either scruples or convictions, and he had already enlisted under the banner of the court. He was aware of the dissensions in the ministry², and if he was told, as he said, that "Mr Grenville would no longer continue in the station he was in³," it is incredible that he believed it. He refused, however, to become secretary of state, and contented himself with a seat in the cabinet and the management of the house of commons. The seals, which Fox refused, were given to Lord Halifax, whose place at the admiralty was taken by Grenville who thus retained his seat in the inner cabinet.

It would seem that Bute had been driven to this reorganisation of the administration by Grenville himself. In Fox he had gained an ally who would be of assistance, not only in the cabinet, but also in parliament. The first lord of the treasury had asserted his supremacy in no indecisive manner: at the moment that his power think on Mr Grenville's dissenting from me in word, look, and manner through the whole examination of the preliminaries." Add. MS. 36797, f. 6.

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 140—142.

² Add. MS. 32943, f. 28; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 128—132.

³ Hist. MSS. Comm., 12th Report, Appendix v. p. 360.

was threatened, he had initiated and carried through a ministerial revolution of no small magnitude. He was now the master of his administration, and, if Grenville still remained to oppose, there was now Fox to defend. The element of mystery is that Grenville should have consented to remain in the cabinet. He had been treated with small courtesy. If Fox had been willing to become secretary of state, Grenville might have been obliged, if he wished to retain a place in the administration, to take his old post of treasurer of the navy. It is clear that he was profoundly dissatisfied with the treatment he had suffered¹; and yet he consented to continue the colleague of the man who had inflicted the insult. There is no mystery in the fact that Bute was willing for him to remain, for he would not be anxious to add Grenville to the opponents of the administration; but that the latter should consent to serve the man who had wronged him is far more inexplicable. The motives of men's actions, hidden as they often are from contemporaries, are seldom revealed to posterity; and our knowledge of the characters of actors in the past is frequently too scanty to enable us to sit in judgment upon them. In consenting to remain in office, Grenville may have been influenced by a desire to continue to act as a check upon Bute's pacific tendencies; but it is also possible that, knowing as he did that Bute would not be likely to continue long in power, he had an eye upon the succession, and thought to purchase promotion by enduring humiliation².

There is no doubt that the admission of Fox into the cabinet, and the relative degradation of George Grenville, facilitated the conclusion of peace. From this point events progressed smoothly. The Duke of Bedford was

¹ *Grenville Papers*, I. 451, 482—485.

² *Grenville Papers*, I. 482—485.

informed that compensation would be demanded for the surrender of Havannah¹, and on October 22nd the cabinet met to consider the final terms of peace². Three days later, another meeting was held³, after which Rigby and a messenger left for France, carrying with them the English answer, and a despatch authorising the Duke of Bedford to give his formal consent to terms of peace⁴. On November 3rd the preliminaries of peace between France, Spain, and England were signed.

Thus Bute had triumphed in the face of difficulties which might have proved insuperable to many a man with a greater name in the political world. He had struggled and prevailed against the divisions in his cabinet and the opposition of his colleagues. With no support, except that which the king gave him, he had successfully asserted his own supremacy; and, by timely concessions, averted the disruption of his administration. But the danger was not yet over. The preliminaries of peace had been signed, but they were to be submitted to parliament for approval; and no one could tell what might then happen. Bute was hated by the people, and Fox was certainly far from popular. The cry might be raised that England was undone by a Scotch favourite and a profligate politician; and the treaty subjected to a searching and hostile criticism. A party might arise, strong in the support of the nation, and bitterly antagonistic to the ministry. Triumphant as Bute had been, his very success had swelled the number of his foes, and sown the seeds of a parliamentary opposition. Pitt would

¹ *Grenville Papers*, I. 480—481.

² Add. MS. 32943, f. 386; Add. MS. 32944, f. 1.

³ Add. MS. 32944, f. 16. This meeting was summoned to consider despatches from Bedford which arrived on October 23rd. Add. MS. 32944, f. 79.

⁴ Add. MS. 32944, f. 93, f. 206.

not be likely to be silent when the preliminaries of peace, which conceded far more than he had ever been willing to grant, were discussed, and none could tell the effect of his utterance, or measure the popular excitement it would arouse. Newcastle, if an opportunity arose, would not be inclined to spare the man who had expelled him from the cabinet. Though he had fallen from his high estate, and was no longer the political power he had once been, he still reckoned upon finding supporters. He counted upon the assistance of those whom he had enriched in former days with pensions, bribes, and sinecure places; and, if he allowed for some of his friends deserting to the banner of the court, he thought to find a sufficient number of faithful followers to form a party which could not be despised¹. He had preserved his liberty by refusing to pledge himself to support the administration²; and, in whatever course of action he chose to adopt, he would be assisted by his friends, Hardwicke and Devonshire, who had retired from the cabinet with him, though the Duke of Devonshire still retained his office of lord chamberlain³.

Bute had accomplished one part of his work, and he had now to prepare to meet parliament. The ministers were certain to be attacked; and it was necessary to strengthen the cabinet. It was more easily said than done. When Charles Townshend was offered the secretaryship of the plantations, he refused it on the grounds that

¹ During the autumn of 1762, Newcastle compiled several estimates of his probable parliamentary strength. They show that he had formed an exaggerated conception of the number of his supporters in both houses. Add. MS. 33000, f. 113, f. 118, f. 153.

² Add. MS. 32938, f. 262, f. 381; Add. MS. 32939, f. 264; *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 114—115.

³ Add. MS. 32938, f. 239; Add. MS. 32939, f. 383, f. 407; Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Shelburne*, i. 136, 137.

he did not wish to be connected with a cabinet in which Fox had a place¹. Lord Waldegrave was approached, but declined to take office because he was not prepared to separate himself from the Duke of Cumberland². But the greatest danger of all lay in the possibility that Pitt and Newcastle would unite in a joint attack upon the ministry. There were, doubtless, obstacles in the way of such an alliance, for Pitt might find it hard to forgive what he had suffered at the hands of the man who had once been his colleague. He was reported to have said that he would never unite with Newcastle³, and the Duke of Devonshire, who possessed great influence amongst the whigs, was opposed to such an union, at least for the present⁴. But Bute, who realised the danger, was anxious to do too much rather than too little; and was willing to take Newcastle back into the administration, and so widen the breach between him and Pitt⁵. During the summer, the Sardinian ambassador, Viry, had informed Newcastle that Bute was anxious to bestow a mark of his regard upon him, and, not long afterwards, Bute told Hardwicke that he was ready to give Newcastle office⁶. In August Lord Lyttelton was employed to tempt Newcastle and Hardwicke to return to the administration⁷. Some weeks later, Henry Fox wrote to the Duke of Devonshire, inviting him, with Newcastle and Hardwicke, to return to their "places at court and council, and restore peace

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 181—183. Charles Townshend still retained his office of secretary at war.

² Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 155, 156.

³ Add. MS. 32941, f. 18, f. 36.

⁴ Add. MS. 32940, f. 227.

⁵ It is possible that Bute was also mindful of the fact that Newcastle was a steady supporter of peace, and would therefore be of assistance in resisting George Grenville.

⁶ Add. MS. 32941, f. 18; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 118.

⁷ Add. MS. 32941, f. 370.

and tranquillity to a people that are at present mad¹." A personal appeal was made to Newcastle by Halifax who pressed him to return to the council "in or out of employment²." Newcastle politely refused the offer, but Devonshire took the opportunity of upbraiding Fox, whose alliance with Bute, he declared, would tend rather to increase than diminish the vigour of the opposition³.

The whig leaders have been so often charged with an indecent hunger of office, and there is so much justification for the accusation, that it is refreshing to find them displaying such fortitude under a torrent of temptations. But their very virtues were to recoil upon their own heads. Bute had failed to win them to his side: they had rejected with contumely the olive branch which he had extended. They could not be left to gather a party of supporters, and embark upon a career of opposition which might bring them into office and overthrow the ministry. They had refused peace, and, therefore, must be given war. It was not for nothing that the ministry was represented by Fox in the house of commons. Unlikely to be affected by scruples or considerations of honour, he was ready to buy success if it could not be earned. Stories, only too likely to be true, are told of vast sums expended in the purchase of votes, and a party was bought to support the preliminaries of peace when they should be submitted to parliament. Nor was resort had to bribery alone: the king expressed, in no hesitating manner, his dislike of the whig leaders. On October 28th the Duke of Devonshire went to court, in order to resign his office of lord chamberlain. The king refused to see him, and when Devonshire inquired with whom he should leave his staff, the message was sent back that he would

¹ Add. MS. 32943, f. 214.

² Add. MS. 32943, f. 260, f. 274.

³ Add. MS. 32943, f. 214.

receive his orders. Not waiting for these instructions, the duke at once went to Lord Egremont, and left with him the insignia of his office¹.

It was necessary to justify such insulting conduct: and the royal displeasure was said to be due to Devonshire's refusal to attend the cabinet council when summoned to do so. The Duke had ceased to be present at cabinet meetings when Newcastle retired; and his absence was sanctioned by the king². He was, therefore, greatly surprised when, on October 3rd, he received a summons to attend a cabinet council shortly to be held to consider the final terms of peace³. He begged to be excused from obeying the command, on the ground that his long absence from such meetings precluded him from giving an opinion on a matter of such importance⁴; and it would seem that his plea was valid. Nor does it appear to have given offence. It is more than likely that Devonshire had been summoned, not in order to place him in an awkward position and compel him to refuse to comply with a royal demand, but with a view of placating Grenville. In reply to the latter's threat to summon Newcastle, Hardwicke and Devonshire, Bute had answered that the first two were not eligible and the last would not come⁵, and it is, therefore, probable that Devonshire was summoned in the confident belief that he would not attend⁶. If by refusing he had incurred the anger of the king, it is difficult to understand the subsequent offer made to him of a place

¹ Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 21, 22; *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 135, 136; Add. MS. 32944, f. 110.

² Hist. MSS. Comm., 12th Report, Appendix, v, p. 275; Add. MS. 32944, f. 266.

³ Add. MS. 32943, f. 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 128—132.

⁶ This at least was Newcastle's view. Add. MS. 32943, f. 90.

in the cabinet¹; and therefore, though his refusal to obey the summons might serve as an excuse for the king's behaviour, the cause must be looked for elsewhere. The rock of offence was probably the letter which Devonshire had written to Fox, denouncing him for his alliance with Bute, and declaring such an union more likely to fan than quench the flames of opposition². Such a declaration was indiscreet, to say the least; and it was not till he had received this ultimatum that Fox informed the Duke of Cumberland that the king was offended and Bute alarmed at Devonshire's refusal to attend the council³. It would seem, therefore, that the king and his confidential minister, dismayed at the rising tide of opposition, determined to take the first step, and declare war upon their opponents.

And as a declaration of war it was taken. One of the whig leaders had been grossly insulted by his sovereign; and his friends and followers were forced to choose between him and the king. If most of the peerage kissed the rod⁴, there were some, at least, who preferred their principles to their places. Lord John Cavendish followed his brother into exile, and Lord Bessborough promptly resigned the office of postmaster. A few days later, their example was followed by the youthful Marquis of Rockingham. Unintimidated by these expressions of disapproval, and mistaking blind obstinacy for heroic resolution, the king took a step which Bute had not advised and Fox did not approve⁵. On November 3rd he struck out the Duke of Devonshire's name from the list of members of the privy council⁶.

Attacked so openly by the court, it behoved the

¹ Add. MS. 32943, f. 214.

² *Ibid.*

³ Add. MS. 32943, f. 303.

⁴ Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 160.

⁵ *Shelburne's Life*, i. 176—179.

⁶ Add. MS. 32944, f. 266.

whigs to look to their arms. Parliament, which was shortly to meet, would see the struggle begin in earnest. Fox was busy, dispensing bribes and purchasing a majority; and the whigs were committed to what might appear to be a lost cause. In going into opposition they laid themselves open to the charge of being disappointed placemen; and their past career would give colour to the accusation. They could not hope to prevail against the purchased majority of the court; and their only chance of success lay in acting as the champions of a public opinion which was not represented in parliament. Yet, much as the nation might dislike Bute and his hirelings, it was not prepared to give its confidence to the whigs. The support of the people was given to Pitt. His services in the past had not been forgotten, and men looked to him for the future. It was he, and not the whigs, who could voice the national opposition to the policy pursued by Bute; and only by uniting with him could Newcastle and his followers hope to be triumphant. Bute had foreseen the danger of such a coalition, and had striven to avert it. He had failed to win back Newcastle into the service of the crown; and it remained for Pitt to decide whether he should lend the lustre of his name to those who had once been his colleagues, and were now ready to be his followers.

As early as September, 1762, Newcastle and Hardwicke perceived how materially the opposition would be strengthened by the accession of Pitt¹; but the obstacles in the way were many. The great commoner had much to forgive before he could enter upon an alliance with Newcastle who had betrayed him in the past, and might, therefore, betray him in the future; nor could Newcastle, who had played the traitor to Pitt, feel that he had yet

¹ Harris' *Life of Hardwicke*, III. 311—314.

been pardoned by the victim of his treachery¹. Moreover, Pitt had already declared against embarking upon a regular course of opposition², and might well refuse to alter his conduct in order to assist Newcastle. But behind the merely personal dislike and distrust of Newcastle, there lay a greater obstacle. If an opposition was formed, it would be bound to attack the preliminaries of peace when submitted to parliament; and Pitt would not be behindhand in the assault. All that Bute had allowed to France, in excess of what had been granted in the negotiations in 1761, would be adversely criticised by him. He would spare no concession which he regarded as unnecessary; and would not be likely to extend much toleration to those who were unwilling or unable to go as far as he did. The hands of Newcastle and Hardwicke were far more tied. Unless they were prepared to endure the charge of the grossest inconsistency, they would be compelled to restrict their criticism to those concessions which had been granted since they left the cabinet. Decency forbade them to attack that which they had formerly advised; and thus, on a question, second to none in importance, they found themselves separated by a deep gulf from an indispensable ally.

Great as these obstacles were, Newcastle did not abandon hope of persuading Pitt to join the opposition. From fear that the latter might refuse any offer made by Newcastle personally, the Duke of Cumberland was chosen to play the part of mediator. The choice was wise. Cumberland was in the intimate confidence of the whig party³; and Pitt was reported to have spoken warmly in

¹ "If he has any resentment to anybody, I am still persuaded it is primarily to me," wrote Newcastle in October, 1762. Add. MS. 32943, f. 332.

² See p. 89.

³ *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 124—127.

his favour¹. A royal duke, however, could hardly begin negotiations with a prominent politician; and it was arranged that Pitt should be informed that Cumberland was willing to give him his opinions on the political situation, should he desire to hear them². This plan was executed through the agency of Thomas Walpole and Nuthall; and, in conversation with these two men and with Cumberland, Pitt declared himself³. He left no doubt of his hostility towards Bute. Again and again he repeated his objections to what he called the favourite's "transcendency of power." He referred to the early days of the reign when he had protested against the proposal that Bute should be given high office; and declared that nothing that had happened since had caused him to alter his opinion. The preliminaries of peace he violently condemned, and referred with no little bitterness to the treatment which the Duke of Devonshire had suffered. Yet, though he held these opinions, and was thus in partial sympathy with the whigs, he refused to contemplate an alliance with them. He described himself as a whig and a believer in the principles of the revolution; but confessed himself under obligations to the tories who had supported him in the past, and refused to concur in any measures of proscription. He elected to stand alone, and though he disclaimed any animosity towards Newcastle, he admitted that he did not wish to see him again at the head of an administration.

Thus Pitt rejected the offer made him; and, in so doing, helped to establish Bute in power. If he had been willing to overcome his prejudices, and modify his

¹ Add. MS. 32944, f. 206.

² *Ibid.*; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 148, 149.

³ Add. MS. 32944, f. 277; Add. MS. 32945, f. 83; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 149—151.

attack upon the preliminaries of peace, an alliance might have been formed, which would have proved decisive for the future history of the country. Memories of the coalition of 1757 would have been evoked by such an union, and the court would have been faced by a party which depended for its strength, not upon parliament, but upon the nation. A divided opposition would never be able to effect anything against an administration which, whatever were its faults, at least presented an united front to its enemies. Pitt chose to stand isolated from those who were ready to enlist under his banner. He would attack the peace, and would gain the applause of the people, incensed by the idea that France had been treated too mercifully¹; and the whigs, fighting in the same battle, and on the same side, would stand outnumbered in parliament and unconsidered by the nation.

It is beyond doubt that by the peace, which was so bitterly attacked, many valuable gains had been acquired for this country. Canada with its dependencies, Senegal, Grenada, Dominica, St Vincent, and Tobago were now English possessions; and Minorca, which had been captured by the French, was restored. The English allies in Germany, with the exception of the king of Prussia, were to receive back those parts of their dominions in the possession of the French; and Spain agreed to abandon her claim to fish off the coasts of Newfoundland, and undertook to cede Florida to England in return for the restoration of Havannah. Yet, substantial as these acquisitions were, it was argued that they had been purchased at too high a price. The French had been

¹ Walpole's *Letters*, v. 271—274; *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 152. Charles Townshend was not in sympathy with the outcry against the ministers. He called the peace "a damned good one." Add. MS. 32945, f. 83.

granted the right of fishing in the gulf of St Lawrence as well as off Newfoundland; and the islands of St Pierre and Miquelon had been ceded to them as shelters for their fishing vessels. England restored her important conquests of Guadeloupe, St Lucia, and Belleisle; and though Florida had been ceded by Spain, this was declared to be insufficient compensation for the surrender of such a valuable conquest as Havannah. More serious than any charge of failing to secure the maximum advantage for England, the ministers were accused of treacherously deserting the cause of the king of Prussia. The preliminaries had drawn a distinction between that prince and the other German allies of England, for whereas the French were called upon to restore the lands they had conquered from the latter, they were only asked to evacuate the Prussian territory they occupied, thus leaving it open whether the lands in question were to fall to the Austrians or the Prussians. As a matter of fact, Prussia and Austria concluded peace a few days after the Peace of Paris had been signed, and Frederick regained the territory that the French had conquered; but this cannot be held to clear the framers of the preliminaries from the taint of treachery¹.

Whether Bute was justified or not in concluding peace upon such terms², he and his colleagues were certain to be attacked in parliament for their action. If everybody else remained silent, Pitt would stand forward in denunciation. But he would not stand alone, for the whigs

¹ It would appear that some offer was made to restore the conquered territory to the king of Prussia; but it is possible that this was not done until peace between Austria and Prussia was certain. Hist. MSS. Comm., 13th Report, Appendix, vii, p. 132.

² It is worth noting that even Pitt only committed himself to the statement that the war could have been continued for one year longer. Add. MS. 32945, f. 83.

were bound to follow in his wake, even against the inclinations of their leaders. Both Hardwicke and Newcastle doubted the wisdom of attacking the preliminaries¹, but they were left with no other alternative. To pursue a policy of inaction would not only widen the breach between themselves and Pitt, but serve to discourage their own followers who would tend to desert to the administration unless they were led into battle. To stand on the defensive is as harassing to politicians as to soldiers; and it might be better to fight a losing battle than not fight at all. The principal members of the whig party met at Newcastle House on December 3rd to decide upon a plan of campaign². Amongst those present was Charles Yorke, a son of Lord Hardwicke, and attorney-general. They met in no spirit of triumph. The failure to conclude an alliance with Pitt had dashed their spirits; and, whichever way they turned, failure confronted them. They stood on the eve of the battle, dispirited and disunited. Newcastle, who had by this time made up his mind and determined to take the plunge, pressed for the opposition to attack those parts of the peace most open to criticism, and then move to adjourn. Though warmly supported by Devonshire and Rockingham, his proposal was not sympathetically received by the others present. Hardwicke only grudgingly assented to the plan, saying that, if Newcastle insisted upon it, he would support it as well as he could.

This was not a happy omen for the future; and the whigs looked forward to certain defeat. The parliamentary battle over the preliminaries of peace was fought on December 9th and the day following. In the upper house, Newcastle, Hardwicke, and Grafton spoke in condemnation

¹ Add. MS. 32945, f. 166, f. 176, f. 196.

² Add. MS. 33000, f. 200.

of the preliminaries, which were approved, however, without a division. In the house of commons, Pitt made a speech which lasted more than three hours. He was vehement in denunciation, and, if words could have destroyed, the ministers would not have survived his condemnation of their action. But he held out no helping hand to the whig party. He took his stand as an independent critic, unconnected with any faction; and went out of his way to declare himself a single man¹. Nor did he refrain from censuring those parts of the peace which had been agreed upon before Newcastle left the cabinet². Applauded by the mob as he left the house, he departed having done nothing to assist those who were struggling in the same cause as himself. While he had displayed his hostility to Bute and his colleagues, he had avoided any demonstration of friendship with Newcastle. Nor was Pitt's speech the only unfortunate event. The attorney-general, though he had been present at the meeting of the whig leaders, left the house on the first day without either voting or speaking; and his elder brother, Lord Royston, voted with the government. On the day following, Charles Yorke ventured a mild criticism of the preliminaries, but neutralised any effect his utterance might have had by saying that, though he could not vote for the address, he did not intend to vote against it³. Newcastle believed that the conduct of the attorney-general and his brother was responsible for the loss of many votes to the opposition⁴.

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 21, 22.

² He condemned the surrender of Miquelon, Martinique, and St Lucia. The latter island had not been surrendered to France when Newcastle resigned his ministerial office.

³ Add. MS. 32945, f. 266, f. 312; Hist. MSS. Comm. Lothian MSS., p. 245.

⁴ Add. MS. 32945, f. 312. For an account of the debates on

The administration had won a substantial victory, and could afford to congratulate themselves upon the overthrow of their opponents. On the first day, only sixty-five votes had been given in the house of commons against the peace, and the minority fell to sixty-three when the address was voted on the following day. It was Bute's hour of triumph. The work, which he had set out to do, was almost accomplished. By the aid of Fox, he had carried the peace through parliament; and the opposition had been routed in the first pitched battle. Unfortunately, Bute permitted himself to abuse the victory he had gained, by allowing a systematic persecution of his opponents to be set on foot, without being able even to plead necessity as his excuse. After what had happened, it was impossible to regard the whigs as formidable opponents, and to make them suffer was, merely, to satisfy a lust for revenge, such as prompts the slaughter of prisoners when the battle is over.

It was apparently Fox who suggested that punishment should be meted out to those who had dared to oppose the peace¹. But retribution was to fall, not only on the leaders, but also on their dependents. Men who held offices under the crown, given to them by Newcastle or his friends, were now to be turned out, not for what they themselves had done, but for the sins of their patrons. Fox's suggestion was acted upon without delay; and a political persecution set on foot, which spared neither great nor small. Newcastle, Grafton and Rockingham were dismissed from their lord lieutenancies, dragging with them in their fall many who had done nothing to deserve so hard a fate. Old servants and dependents,

December 9th and 10th, see *Parliamentary History*, xv.; Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 23, 24; Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 176, seq.

¹ *Shelburne's Life*, i. 179, 180.

who had retired and been preferred to very small places, were rigorously hunted out and deprived of their livelihood¹. Newcastle pathetically confessed that his heart was almost broken by the cruelties inflicted upon "poor innocent men, in order to be revenged on me²." Impartial observers were shocked by the systematic rigour and comprehensive character of the persecution; and, though excuses were made, as excuses will always be made for every act of iniquity³, no arguments could blind men to the fact that innocent men had been called upon to suffer for no sufficient reason.

Great as was the crime, the blunder was greater still. Left to itself, the opposition might have died in its birth, as indeed it was rumoured that it had⁴; but, like many a religious sect, it gained fresh life from suffering. It was not the time for those who stood in the same condemnation to waste their energy in bickering; and the mutual recriminations, which so often follow failure, were hushed in face of the common peril. The breach between Newcastle and Hardwicke, caused by the behaviour of the latter's sons when the preliminaries were before parliament⁵, was quickly healed; and the ex-chancellor declared that the constitution itself was in danger⁶. Nor was Pitt indifferent to passing events, for, on Christmas Day, the important news reached Newcastle that the great commoner was deeply offended by what had happened, and, though still unwilling to unite with Newcastle, was ready, in the words of the latter, "to act in the house of commons with us upon all

¹ Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 184—185.

² Add. MS. 32945, f. 312.

³ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 185—188.

⁴ Walpole's *Letters*, v. 287—288.

⁵ Add. MS. 32945, f. 312, f. 323.

⁶ Add. MS. 32945, f. 335.

great occasions¹." Thus, by his folly, Bute had succeeded in drawing Pitt and Newcastle nearer together.

Severe as the defeat had been, the whig party had not been destroyed. A serious rebuff had been suffered and a great humiliation endured, but the future was not without hope². And out of evil had come good; for, shocked by the ruthlessness of Bute, Pitt was more inclined to be friendly with those who had been so severely punished. Rumours were afloat of divisions and dissensions in the ministry. It was said that Bute had grown jealous of the power and predominance acquired by Fox, that George Grenville intended to resign, and that his example would be quickly followed by Egremont³. It was also reported that difficulties had arisen over converting the preliminaries into a final treaty of peace, that Egremont and Grenville were again opposing Bute, and that Lord Egmont, though only joint-postmaster, had been summoned to a cabinet meeting, in order that he might support the first minister against his opponents⁴. Whatever truth there might be in these reports, the negotiations with France had gone too far to be seriously endangered; and, by the beginning of February, 1763, Bute knew that the final treaty between England, France, and Spain would soon be signed, and that peace would shortly be concluded between Prussia and Austria⁵. On February 10th the Peace of Paris was signed, and Bute had accomplished his task.

While the ministers had been thus engaged, the whigs had been quiescent but not idle. Withdrawn into their

¹ Add. MS. 32945, f. 362.

² Add. MS. 32945, f. 289, f. 335; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 152, 153.

³ Add. MS. 32945, f. 335, f. 435, f. 460.

⁴ Add. MS. 32933, f. 73. This letter is misdated by a year. Add. MS. 32946, f. 141, f. 153, f. 159.

⁵ Hist. MSS. Comm. 13th Report, Appendix, VII, p. 132.

camp, they were preparing for the next sally, and endeavouring to win Pitt over to their side. His more friendly attitude had spurred Newcastle to renewed efforts. He asked both Devonshire and Rockingham to visit Pitt, without whom, he confessed, nothing could be done¹. Thinking that he might stand in the way of a reconciliation, Newcastle was willing to promise that he would not again take office under the crown²; and this act of renunciation may be taken as a proof of his sincerity. But Pitt remained obdurate, and refused to be won. Though ready to attend parliament "upon any national or constitutional points," he steadily refused to enter into direct opposition. He declared that he desired to have nothing to do with Lord Bute, but deprecated any proscription of the tories³. Newcastle and Devonshire thought that Pitt feared to go into opposition lest he should risk the loss of his pension⁴; but it is possible to explain his conduct on less ignoble grounds. Newcastle represented the principles of party government. The opposition, which he directed, was to fight as a party, and to prevail as a party. It must present an united front to the enemy; and differences of opinion within its ranks must not be tolerated, or, at least, must be concealed. Pitt was not prepared to bow his head to the yoke. He distrusted Newcastle, and preferred to deal with questions, as they arose, on their merits; and was not willing to pledge himself to oppose every measure introduced by a tory statesman. He desired, as fervently as Newcastle, to drive Bute from power, not because he was a tory, but because he was inefficient.

¹ Add. MS. 32946, f. 249, f. 259.

² Add. MS. 32946, f. 266, f. 317.

³ Add. MS. 32946, f. 317, f. 329; Add. MS. 32947, f. 21.

⁴ Add. MS. 32946, f. 317, f. 329.

Pitt was soon to give an illustration of his independent position and his freedom from party restrictions. Now that the war had come to an end, it was necessary to place the army upon a peace footing; and this question came before parliament early in March. Newcastle and his followers considered the ministerial proposals objectionable in every way¹; but it was known that Pitt held an opposite opinion, and intended to support the ministers in parliament². Caution was necessary. If Newcastle carried out his original idea, and put up Legge to attack the ministry, offence might be given to Pitt; and, in order to avoid this, Legge was instructed to "state his own private thoughts, but, out of deference to Mr Pitt, give them up to him³." We do not know whether this plan was executed or not, but we have Newcastle's word that, though Pitt declared himself vehemently in favour of the ministerial measure, the opposition avoided giving him any cause for offence⁴.

The debate on the army had taken place on March 4th. Three days later, Pitt delivered a violent attack upon the cyder bill, and, in the course of his speech, insulted George Grenville⁵. On the following day, he dined at Devonshire House, in the company of Newcastle, Rockingham, and Hardwicke⁶. Over that meeting hangs a cloud of mystery which will probably never be dispelled. It was understood by contemporaries to have a political significance⁷, and, on March 9th, Lord Temple informed Newcastle "that what he had been about unsuccessfully for six months, viz. the bringing Mr Pitt and us together,

¹ Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 193 seq. ² Add. MS. 32947, f. 163.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Add. MS. 32947, f. 182.

⁵ *Parliamentary History*, xv. 1307—1309; *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 218—220; Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 198.

⁶ Harris' *Hardwicke*, iii. 335.

⁷ *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 218—220.

is now come about as it were of itself: that nothing could be better¹." Rigby noted the cheerful faces of the whigs "since they put themselves under Pitt's management²"; and, two months after the dinner at Devonshire House, Newcastle said "all of us, Mr Pitt and my Lord Temple included, will act a firm part, be inseparable from each other; and never give in to any administration which is not founded and has its basis upon the whigs and the true friends of the protestant succession³."

It would, therefore, seem that Pitt had drawn nearer to the whigs, and had agreed to conclude some sort of an alliance with them. We know nothing of the terms of the compact, and it is probable that Newcastle believed Pitt to have committed himself more deeply to the opposition than he actually had. Nor is it easy to know what decided Pitt to throw in his lot with the whigs at this particular juncture. It is possible that the conclusion of the Peace of Paris, by removing a question from the sphere of politics on which Newcastle and Pitt were not in agreement, facilitated the union; and Newcastle's declaration, that he would not again take an important ministerial office, may also have contributed to the same end⁴. The nature of the alliance remains unknown. It is clear that Newcastle and his friends imagined that they had secured the support of Pitt, and believed that he was willing to embark upon a career of opposition, and storm the royal closet at the point of the sword; but it is more than likely that they had formed exaggerated hopes. Ready as

¹ Add. MS. 32947, f. 216.

² *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 219.

³ Add. MS. 32948, f. 291.

⁴ In October, 1763, Newcastle wrote to Cumberland: "You know, sir, better than anybody, the pains which I have taken to unite us with Mr Pitt. I made a public declaration at first that no consideration should ever make me come into the treasury again." Add. MS. 32952, f. 119.

he might be to unite with the whigs in opposing the cyder tax, it is unlikely that he would deny the principles which he had so recently laid down, and enter upon a formal opposition to the government. It not infrequently happens that one party in a contract imagines himself to have gained more than he actually has; and it is not improbable that, whilst Newcastle believed that Pitt had become completely identified with the opposition, Pitt regarded himself rather as an independent ally.

But, when all allowances have been made, it remains certain that Pitt was on more friendly and intimate terms with the whigs than he had been for many months past; and it is, therefore, not surprising to find the opposition displaying renewed energy and spirit. The cyder bill offered a convenient point for attack. This measure had provoked popular discontent, especially in the cyder counties; and its passage through the lower house was contested by the opposition, if not with success, at least with credit and vigour. On the first reading in the house of commons on March 17th, the minority numbered eighty-eight to the hundred and eighty-four of the government¹; but, when the bill was in committee, an amendment, proposing that the tax should fall on the buyers and not on the makers of cyder, was only lost by sixty-nine votes².

When the bill had been passed by the commons, it was doubtful whether it should be opposed in the house of lords. It is very unusual for the upper house to divide upon a money bill; but the occasion might be held to justify a resort to extraordinary expedients. Those, who were known as the cyder lords, declared their intention of continuing the opposition³. Newcastle and Cumberland

¹ Add. MS. 32947, f. 236.

² Add. MS. 32947, f. 265.

³ These cyder lords were Lord Foley, Lord Ward, Lord Oxford, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Suffolk, and Lord Fortescue (Add. MS. 32947, f. 313).

thought that the bill should be allowed to pass through the upper house unopposed¹; but the former was influenced by his friends², and by Pitt, to sanction a course of conduct which he did not approve. Pitt was anxious for the attack to continue, and for a protest to be signed by the peers who dissented from the measure³; but the Duke of Cumberland was of an exactly opposite opinion. Newcastle could not afford to offend either Cumberland or Pitt; but it was difficult to see how he could please them both. He attempted to find safety in a middle course. The cyder bill was opposed in the upper house, and the leaders of the opposition took part in the debate; but to the two protests, which were drawn up, only three signatures were appended⁴. Both Temple and Pitt were aggrieved that the protests had not been more widely signed⁵; and the abstention of the whig leaders had not been accidental. To please Pitt, Newcastle and his supporters had attacked the bill in the upper house: to please Cumberland, they had refrained from signing the protests. No ill consequences apparently resulted from this policy of compromise. Cumberland explained his principles of objection to Pitt, and Grafton contrived to pacify Lord Temple; so that Newcastle could say with truth that he was very happy "at the manner in which we have finished our conduct this session⁶." Indeed, he had cause for self-congratulation; for the end had been better than the beginning. The ministry had not been overthrown, but the opposition had succeeded in establishing friendly relations with Pitt, and could look forward with hope to the future.

¹ Add. MS. 32947, f. 319, f. 327.

² Add. MS. 32947, f. 319.

³ Add. MS. 32947, f. 317.

⁴ The first protest was signed by Foley, Oxford and Willoughby de Broke; the second by Temple, Bolton and Fortescue.

⁵ Add. MS. 32947, f. 359.

⁶ Add. MS. 32947, f. 361; Add. MS. 32948, f. 3.

In the meantime the political situation had been changed by an incident which few could have foreseen—Bute had decided to abandon office. As early as March 11th, Fox was aware of his leader's determination¹; and, when the news was published to the world a few weeks later, many explanations were given of conduct so inexplicable. It was said that Bute had been driven to resign by the popular outcry against the cyder bill; but it is difficult to believe this, seeing that he must have determined upon resignation either shortly before, or directly after, the introduction of that measure. Moreover, the man, who had braved the people's indignation against the Peace of Paris, might be expected to stand his ground over the cyder bill. It has also been suggested that his position was rendered untenable by the alliance between Pitt and Newcastle; but it is equally difficult to accept this view, seeing that only three days elapsed between the earliest date, at which that alliance could have been concluded, and the day on which Fox learnt Bute's intention. It is far more likely that Bute spoke the truth when he said that he had taken office in order to bring the war to a conclusion, and had always intended to retire when that task was accomplished. He had accepted office unwillingly; and his experience had not been so fortunate as to cause him to forget his earlier prejudices. He had been thwarted, contradicted, and outvoted in his own cabinet². He had

¹ Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 186.

² "What treatment," wrote Bute on April 8th, "have I not met with. I allude not to the mere vulgar clamor against me; no, I speak of the interior of government. As a minister of this country, I have seen myself single in a cabinet formed by my own hand. I have very lately been left alone unsupported by any one man in government, tho' opposed to the most violent attacks of the enemy; and that in parliament, defending the measure of the year; and only assisted by two of my own faithful friends." Add. MS. 36797, f. 42.

fallen foul of Grenville, and was probably jealous of the influence and power acquired by Fox. His haughty and pedantic manners had stood in the way of his making friends. He had earned the hatred of the people, and was the target of every pamphleteer and scribbler who wished to attack the government. As long as he remained in power, the king, his master, could never hope to gain the affection of his people; and therefore, now that he had done his work, it was time for him to go¹. Pitt was probably right when he remarked, on hearing the news, "I think it rather sudden than surprising: Lord Bute's undertaking seeming to me the matter of astonishment, not his lordship's departing from it²."

But, though Bute had determined to resign the burden of office, he did not intend to make way for those who had opposed him. The system of government, which he had erected, must continue unchanged; and he would have preferred to have remained at the head of the administration, rather than allow the king to fall back into the slavery from which he had rescued him. There must be no interregnum, and, when the world heard that Bute had resigned, it must also learn who was his successor. A place in the administration was offered to Pitt, and refused³; and Henry Fox was tempted with the offer of the post of first lord of the treasury. Fox was willing enough to take up the burden which Bute was preparing to lay down; but his wife pressed him to

¹ Von Ruville's *William Pitt, Graf von Chatham*, III. 117, 118. "A bad constitution and a want of resolution make him inadequate to a first situation which he gave up after he had fought the battle, and obtained the victory." Add. MS. 22358, f. 22. See also Duten's *Memoirs of a Traveller* (1806), II. 34.

² Add. MS. 32948, f. 84.

³ Add. MS. 32949, f. 191; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 169. Pitt believed that, if he had accepted the offer, Bute would not have resigned.

decline, and conjugal affection triumphed over political ambition¹. Fox's refusal necessitated the prize being given to George Grenville. It was only with great reluctance that Fox agreed to this arrangement², nor is it likely that the choice was entirely approved by Bute. Grenville had shown himself obstinate and pertinacious; and had cause to remember the treatment he had suffered at Bute's hands³. But there was no one else to fill the vacant place. Fox and Pitt had declined, for different reasons, to fill the breach, and Grenville prevailed through the lack of eligible rivals. His claims were too great to be neglected. When called upon by the king, he had foregone his ambition of becoming speaker, to take upon himself the burden of managing the house of commons, and, though he had done much to cause offence, Bute had no option but to appoint him his successor. If he had been passed over, it is not improbable that the opposition would have received a new recruit.

Yet, if Grenville was to become first minister, and he was willing enough to take the post, substantial alterations must be made in the administration. His past had not been so blameless as to render it safe to give him unrestricted power; and, therefore, Fox suggested that Shelburne, who was attached to Bute, should be made secretary of state in place of Lord Egremont who should be given the office of lord president of the council, then vacant by Lord Granville's death. In order to win the support of the Duke of Bedford for the reconstructed administration, Lord Gower, a member of the party known as the "Bloomsbury gang," was to be given the

¹ Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 194—196.

² Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 196—199.

³ Newcastle thought him unsuitable both "as to his ability, and as to his submissive temper." Add. MS. 32948, f. 48.

admiralty¹. To these proposals objection was taken by Grenville. He probably resented not being allowed to form the administration which he was to lead²; and protested against the substitution of Shelburne for Egremont as secretary of state³. Bute, chagrined at Grenville's conduct, hinted that, if he could not accept the stipulated conditions, the treasury might be bestowed elsewhere⁴; but this was an empty threat, and Egremont was allowed to retain his office. Shelburne was willing to be omitted from the administration altogether, but this Bute would not sanction⁵; and he was given the office of first commissioner of trade. The admiralty, which Charles Townshend might have had but for his folly, was given to Lord Sandwich⁶. The Duke of Bedford was offered the post of lord president of the council, but declined to become a member of an administration formed on so narrow a basis. Either not understanding the designs of the king, or understanding them only too well, he advised that the whig leaders should be asked to take office⁷; but war had been declared against the opposition, and Bute stated that the king intended "never upon any account to suffer those ministers of the late reign, who have attempted to fetter and enslave him, ever to come into his service while he lives to hold the sceptre⁸."

The resignation of Bute, and the reconstruction of the ministry under the leadership of Grenville, opens a new epoch in the reign of George III. Looking back upon the course of events since the day that he had succeeded

¹ Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, I. 196—199.

² *Grenville Papers*, II. 38—40.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, II. 32, 33.

⁵ *Ibid.* II. 40, 41.

⁶ Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 209, 210.

⁷ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 227—230. It was reported that Egremont and Halifax also believed that the administration should be widened. Add. MS. 32948, f. 54.

⁸ *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 224.

his grandfather, the king could contemplate with pleasure and gratification the work he had accomplished. The war had been brought to an end, and the whigs had been driven from office. Bute had triumphed over the enemies of the new system, and those, who had dared to oppose the king's favourite, had met with condign punishment. The royal authority had once more become a political force of no mean importance, and the men, who had tyrannised over George II, found themselves subjected to the tyranny of his grandson. The relative ease, with which this had been accomplished, was doubtless due, in a large measure, to the intimate relations existing between Bute and the king. Genuinely attached to his master, Bute had no ambition save to serve what he thought to be the interests of the crown; and, as long as he remained at the head of the administration, the king was able effectively to influence and control the decisions of his ministers. Yet, great as the success had been, there was one fatal flaw. Bute had succeeded in much that he had undertaken, but he had completely failed to win the favour of the people. Disliked and distrusted from the beginning, the popular detestation of him had steadily increased in volume, and, as long as he remained in the service of the crown, the king would find the nation arrayed against him. Bute must now retire, in order that the stigma of unpopularity, attaching to the court, might be removed, and it, therefore, became necessary to make a new arrangement which would present difficulties of its own. It had been comparatively easy for the king to exercise a controlling influence over the cabinet as long as Bute remained the guiding spirit of that body, but, if his place was taken by one who regarded the king as a master and not as a friend, George III might discover how much he owed his earlier success to the peculiar relations existing between himself and his favourite.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GRENVILLE MINISTRY.

WHEN George III consented to appoint Grenville to be Bute's successor, it was not with the intention of surrendering himself into the hands of his new prime minister. The latter had not been allowed an unfettered choice in the selection of his colleagues; nor could he flatter himself that he possessed the confidence of the crown in the measure that it had been given to his predecessor. Bute, though he had retired from office, continued to be the king's trusted adviser, and intended to rule England from the royal closet. He had abandoned the political arena, but had not divested himself of his power, and was to play the part of a maker and unmaker of ministers¹. Though he left London shortly after his resignation, he soon returned; and, early in June, Lord Rockingham was approached by a friend who told him that the favourite had taken a dislike to the ministers, and was anxious to know whether Pitt and the whigs would come into office². It is true that, a little earlier, Lord Egremont declared that

¹ "Wishing one moment to return to office but the next afraid to take it, he considers every minister as his rival, and the moment he suspects him of standing fair for the favour of his master, it becomes immediately his object to remove him." Dated September, 1765. Add. MS. 22358, f. 22.

² Add MS. 32949, f. 52, f. 70.

he had discovered no trace of Bute's influence, and was prepared to take strong measures upon so doing¹; but Newcastle was probably nearer the truth in his surmise that the ministers only held their power on sufferance, and that the late prime minister was the master of the situation². This was the new experiment rendered necessary by Bute's retirement. Compelled to employ those whom he did not trust, the king gave his confidence to the man without a place in the administration. Grenville and his colleagues were reduced to the insignificant position of stop-gaps. They were to be allowed to remain in office as long as they continued to obey the king, and until more suitable successors could be found. The shadow of Bute still rested upon them; and, if they struck for independence, it was more than likely that they would find themselves driven from power.

In any circumstances, succeeding as he did a prime minister who had been the friend as well as the adviser of the king, Grenville would have had a difficult part to play; and neither by training nor by temperament was he adapted for a delicate situation. Stiff and arrogant in demeanour, touchy of his dignity, and fond of the exercise of power, he was not equipped by nature to act a diplomatic rôle. Unduly conscious of his own integrity, he could neither be conciliatory nor ingratiating; and he was the last man who would submit to possess the form without the substance of power. Yet, anxious as he might be to gain ascendancy over the king and Bute, his chance of doing so seemed remote. He could not turn for strength to the support of the people. Pitt was still regarded as the only man capable of guiding the destinies of the country, and Grenville's administration was generally

¹ Harris' *Life of Hardwicke*, III. 350—353.;

² Add. MS. 32949, f. 338.

considered to be doomed to a speedy destruction¹. Nor could he count upon the loyalty of all his colleagues. Shelburne, who held the office of first commissioner of trade, would be likely to sympathise with Bute rather than with Grenville; and, doubtless because his prejudices in favour of the favourite were well known, he found himself treated with neglect by his fellow ministers, and meditated resignation². Thus, unsupported alike by the crown and by the people, the ministry presented many points of attack, and might be expected to succumb to the first assault, from whatever quarter it was delivered. It is one of the many instances of the fallaciousness of political prophecy that Grenville, whose destruction seemed so imminent, was to continue in power for more than two years.

Parliament had risen on April 19th, and was not to meet again until the following autumn. Till then, the ministry could count upon immunity from attack by the opposition; but, in the early years of the reign of George III, administrations were more often destroyed by court intrigues than parliamentary defeats, and, unless Grenville could secure the good-will of the king, it was not unlikely that, when the autumn came, another than he would be found sitting on the treasury bench. It is possible that it was in the hope of pleasing the king that the ministers waged war upon John Wilkes, for it was known that George III was deeply offended by Wilkes' attack upon the king's speech at the close of the last session of parliament. If they could have foreseen the consequences of a step, seemingly so trivial, they might well have hesitated before beginning a contest which was to exercise a disturbing influence upon English politics for many

¹ *Walpole's Letters*, v. 312—315; Add. MS. 32948, f. 291.

² Add. MS. 32949, f. 5, f. 338; Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 275—277.

years to come, and enable a profligate adventurer to pose as a champion of freedom. Yet, severely as their subsequent conduct may be censured, they can hardly be blamed for failing to discern that the suppression of a scurrilous opposition writer would produce a ferment of popular excitement, and constitute the principal question of debate during one session of parliament.

Of Wilkes' private character, probably the less said the better. The companion of Sandwich and Dashwood in their leisure hours, and a distinguished member of that brotherhood, which had its headquarters at Medenham Abbey, and indulged in orgies both obscene and profane, he moved in a society which cultivated vice as an art. But he was not merely a debauched man of fashion, nor did indulgence in his vicious propensities entirely destroy his nobler qualities. He was both brave and generous; and his social tact and charm of manner were sufficient to overcome the stubborn prejudice of Dr Johnson, and to win the approval of Gibbon. Possessed of a brilliant if not always decorous wit, he was the author of one of the most amusing and least delicate repartees in the English language¹. In politics he was in sympathy with the whig opposition, and had been active in the attack upon Lord Bute and the Scotch. Though possessed of a seat in parliament, he had taken little part in debate; and it was in his paper, *The North Briton*, that he delivered his most savage blows against the court and the favourite. It was in this journal that the attack upon the royal speech, at the close of the parliamentary session, had appeared. The king had described the Peace of Paris as "honourable to my crown, and beneficial to my people," and had laid stress

¹ The repartee in question has also been credited to Mirabeau and Foote, the actor. See Lord Brougham's *Statesmen of the time of George III* (1855), i. 431; Duten's *Memoirs of a Traveller* (1806), v. 26.

upon the "happy effects which the several allies of my crown have derived from this salutary measure." Wilkes seized the opportunity thus given him. Carefully stating the constitutional doctrine that the king's speech must be considered as the composition of his ministers, he described it as "the most abandoned instance of ministerial effrontery, not to be paralleled in the annals of this country." He expressed regret that the king had given the sanction of his name to such mendacious statements, and asserted that Prussia had not been assisted but betrayed by the peace between England and France. The Judas was Bute. "In vain will such a minister," wrote Wilkes, "or the foul dregs of his power, the tools of corruption and despotism, preach up in the speech that spirit of concord, and that obedience to the laws, which is essential to good order. They have sent the spirit of discord through the land, and I will prophesy that it will never be extinguished but by the extinction of their power."

These were bold words, and, according to the custom of the time, the ministers were justified in proceeding against the man who had uttered them. They could support their action by many precedents, and to leave an attack of such virulence unpunished might easily be construed as weakness. Moreover, if, by the prosecution of an infamous and scurrilous pamphleteer, the good-will of the king could be acquired, a double end might be attained—a troublesome opposition writer would be suppressed, and the ministers' tenure of office rendered more secure. Therefore, three days after the offending number of the *North Briton* had been published, a general warrant was issued by Lord Halifax, authorising the arrest of the authors, printers and publishers of the journal, and the seizure of their papers. A large number of persons

were arrested under this warrant, and amongst them Wilkes. He was taken before the secretaries of state, and committed a close prisoner to the Tower. In this matter, the ministers had not acted blindly or in ignorance. They were well aware that the arrest of Wilkes would raise the question of the parliamentary privilege of freedom from arrest; and, before apprehending him, they had consulted the attorney and solicitor general who gave the opinion that parliamentary privilege did not cover seditious libel. The attorney general, Charles Yorke, before giving his written opinion to the ministers, had submitted it to his father, by whom it was approved¹; and that Lord Hardwicke, with no interest to serve, and certainly with no inclination to smooth the way for the ministers, sanctioned the step that they were about to take, may serve to show that expert legal opinion was not all on one side.

But, though it is possible to defend the ministers for arresting Wilkes, it is impossible to excuse many of their subsequent actions. Wilkes was closely imprisoned in the Tower, and the Duke of Grafton and Lord Temple were refused admission to him. The latter moved for a writ of *habeas corpus* in the court of common pleas, over which Pratt presided; and it is worthy of note that, in so doing, he pursued an unusual course. "Such a writ," John Yorke informed his brother, "has not been moved in that court since the reign of Charles II²." Temple had not acted without reason. Pratt was his friend, and intimate

¹ "The privilege," wrote Lord Hardwicke to his son, "has been variously laid down, sometimes with an exception of treason, felony, and breach of the peace; and sometimes of treason, felony, and sureties of the peace. But your report is agreeable to the report made by Sir Thomas Lee in Mr Onslow's case, which you will find entered in the Journal, 20 May, 1675: Printed Journals, ix. 342." Add. MS. 35353, f. 316; see also Add. MS. 35428, f. 1.

² Add. MS. 35374, f. 200.

with Pitt; and the supporters of Wilkes preferred that he should be tried by Pratt in the common pleas, rather than by Mansfield in the king's bench. Thus, from the outset, politics were mingled with law to the detriment of both.

On account of something very like chicanery and sharp practice on the part of the ministers, it was found necessary to issue a second writ of *habeas corpus* to secure the appearance of Wilkes. On May 3rd he was brought to the court of common pleas to stand his trial. He was the hero of the hour, and the popular excitement, in the opinion of one who was present, was comparable to that displayed at the trial of the seven bishops¹. The city had enthusiastically espoused his cause, and the court was thronged with his supporters². Pratt deferred judgment till May 6th, when he discharged the prisoner on the ground that parliamentary privilege covered every offence save treason, felony, and a breach of the peace; and a seditious libel, though it might cause the peace to be broken, was not in itself an actual violation of it. The decision was greeted with loud applause. The ministry had suffered a serious and humiliating rebuff, and Wilkes was now doubly dangerous. The discomfort he had endured was a small price to pay for the popularity he had gained. He was now able to pose as the victim of oppression and the champion of freedom; and his native insolence and audacity were stimulated by the knowledge that he had the support of the people. The ministers would have acted wisely in neglecting him; but, as they had already deeply committed themselves, they resolved to take further measures. Against the advice of Charles Yorke³, a prosecution was begun against Wilkes in the court of king's bench; but the latter, standing upon his parlia-

¹ Add. MS. 35353, f. 325.

² *Ibid.* 35374, f. 200.

³ Add. MS. 35430, f. 214; *Ibid.* 35353, f. 327; *Ibid.* 32949, f. 5.

mentary privilege refused to appear. This attempt to overrule Pratt's judgment served no useful purpose, and only contributed to show the vindictiveness of the ministers against the man whom they could have most effectively injured by treating him with indifference. Nor was Wilkes allowed to suffer alone: Lord Temple, who had stood forward as his friend and patron, was summarily dismissed from the lord lieutenancy of Buckinghamshire¹.

Wilkes and his fellow victims had been arrested under a general warrant, an expedient of doubtful legality, which, in the opinion of Hardwicke, was justified at least by precedent². Those, who had been arrested, began actions against the messengers who had apprehended them; and Pratt, in his judicial capacity, declared general warrants to be illegal. These two questions—the extent of parliamentary privilege and the use of general warrants—were to be warmly debated when parliament met in the autumn; and it might appear, at first sight, that Wilkes had provided the opposition with formidable weapons of attack. The ministers stood convicted of a violation of the law of the land and a breach of one of the most cherished privileges of parliament. The victim of their animosity had risen to the dignity of a popular hero; and it would seem that the folly of the administration had turned to the advantage of the opposition. This, however, is only partly true. Wilkes was to prove a source of discord amongst those who ought to have stood

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 55.

² "I return your grace enclosed the copy of the first warrant, which, whatever objections there may be to it, I believe is the form, which has often been made use of in the office; perhaps in your grace's own time. My lord chief justice Pratt might probably not be acquainted with it, for I do not remember there was any prosecution for a libell (*sic*), whilst he was attorney general." Add. MS. 32948, f. 199.

united against the government; and the evil that he wrought was not confined to the circle of his enemies. The innocent were to suffer as well as the guilty, and it would have been better for the whigs if he had never endured martyrdom in the cause of freedom.

Newcastle and his followers had based their hopes of success upon the support and co-operation of Pitt. They had learnt that without him they could achieve nothing of any consequence; and, at the very moment when he seemed to stand most aloof, he had established friendly relations with the whig party. What Newcastle had schemed and striven for seemed accomplished, and the opposition now numbered the popular hero in its ranks. Pitt, embracing those whom he had formerly shunned, declared that "he had the honour to be united with several great whig lords who, incidentally, passed under the description of the Duke of Newcastle's friends, and were the main pillars of the whig party. That he was a whig, and meant to act upon whig principles¹." Such a declaration might well cause joy in the opposition camp, but it was easy to build too much upon it. Though willing to work with the whigs, and boasting of his union with them, Pitt was not prepared to sacrifice his right to an independent opinion, or inclined to compromise, merely for the sake of preserving political union. Though he thought that it was essential for the stability of the government that the king should give office to those who had served his grandfather, and stood by the Hanoverian succession, he did not wish to assist in a party triumph, or lend a hand in the proscription of all tories. He had joined the opposition, but it was on his own terms; and, between him and Newcastle, lay a difference of political

¹ Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 361; see also Add. MS. 32948, f. 341; *Ibid.* 32949, f. 1, f. 338; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 169.

opinion which would render harmonious co-operation no slight difficulty.

Newcastle knew that he had not yet fulfilled his task. Having secured Pitt, it was necessary to keep him; but that would not be easy to do. It would be well, as Newcastle saw, that the opposition should agree upon a policy which Pitt approved¹, but such a policy had still to be discovered. The prosecution of Wilkes, which might have afforded an opportunity of a general attack upon the ministry, promoted discord rather than union in the opposition. Pitt, who asserted that the privileges of parliament had been violated by the arrest of Wilkes, was aggrieved by the support that Hardwicke had given to the attorney general; and declared that "he would never ally himself with so-called whigs who were willing to surrender the liberty of the subject and the freedom of the press²." Against Charles Yorke he was particularly prejudiced. Yorke had offended by supporting and approving the prosecution of Wilkes; but the cause of Pitt's dislike lay deeper than that. As a distinguished lawyer, and the son of a famous chancellor, it was not unnaturally Charles Yorke's ambition to occupy the seat which his father had adorned, and Lord Hardwicke, a fond and affectionate parent, was equally anxious to see his son gain the greatest prize of the legal profession. Newcastle was, undoubtedly, willing enough to satisfy the ambition of the son of his old friend; but Pitt had made up his mind that Pratt should be chancellor before Yorke³, and was not

¹ Add. MS. 32948, f. 99.

² Add. MS. 32950, f. 65.

³ Add. MS. 32950, f. 65. "Mr Pitt then entered further into his own grievance, and his apprehension of playing a solo with my Lord Temple....He said to me, if I am so necessary as you all tell me I am, why should there be any difficulty in giving me proper support in the formation of the ministry and council. If I am in this desperate situa-

likely to give way to the arguments of Newcastle or Hardwicke.

Such were the difficulties which had to be overcome before the alliance between Pitt and the Newcastle party was firmly cemented; but, even if an understanding had been reached on these points, all would not be accomplished. The sacrifice of Yorke's ambitions and of Hardwicke's reputation as a lawyer would be unavailing if Pitt refused to sanction or arrange any definite plan of opposition. Newcastle, with the insight of an old parliamentary warrior, saw that without a programme the opposition would quickly be wrecked: a banner must be raised, round which men could rally. "Talking at large," he shrewdly remarked, "will no longer do": Pitt must be brought to the point, and forced to declare what measures he would support, and what measures he would oppose¹.

It was never easy to bring Pitt to the point, and Newcastle was unable to do it. He had two conferences with Pitt in the early part of August, and confessed himself disappointed in the result². Pitt was friendly enough, and showed no wish to sever his connection with the whig party; but he talked in a tone of despair, and lamented the impossibility of achieving anything against the opposition of the crown. He raised objections to the idea of Charles Yorke becoming chancellor, asserted his difference of opinion with Lord Hardwicke, and hinted at a dislike of the influence exercised by the Duke of Cumberland over

tion to answer for everything, is it unnatural in me to desire that the great seal may be put into the hands of a friend of mine, especially when that friend was attorney general, and is now lord chief justice of the common pleas, which gives him the rank over everybody?" Newcastle to Devonshire, August 11th, 1763. *Ibid.*

¹ Add. MS. 32949, f. 386.

² *Ibid.* 32950, f. 65.

the whig party¹. He seemed to fear that he and Temple might enter upon a course of opposition, only to be deserted by their allies at the critical moment. Newcastle learnt nothing of the line of action that Pitt would take, and failed to gain the programme of opposition that he wanted.

Thus matters stood in the month of August 1763. The situation was dangerous, but it was certainly far from hopeless. Newcastle never wavered in his conviction that the co-operation of Pitt was essential to the success of the opposition²; and, if the latter's objections to Hardwicke and Yorke could be overcome, and his prejudice against an organised opposition removed, all might yet go smoothly. Neither the king nor the ministers were unmindful of the dangers that confronted them. The administration was narrow and confined, and the popularity, which might have been acquired by the retirement of Bute, had been forfeited by the prosecution of Wilkes. The court and cabinet might easily succumb to an united attack of the opposition led by Pitt, and the king obliged to submit to terms dictated by his victorious enemies. Real as the danger was, it appeared possible to escape it. It was within the power of the crown to use the arts of political seduction, and break up the opposition by conferring office upon its leading members. It was an age when party ties sat lightly upon men; and it is to the credit of Pitt and the whigs that the king failed. It shows that their union, as far as it went, was real, that, however divided they might be in opinion, they were ready to

¹ He complained that Cumberland favoured an alliance with Austria in preference to an alliance with Prussia. Newcastle assured him that Cumberland was in favour of England being connected with both countries.

² Add. MS. 32950, f. 162.

stand by one another when it came to treating with the crown.

The first member of the opposition to receive an offer from the court was Lord Hardwicke. Approving as he did of the arrest of Wilkes, and having a son a member of the administration, it might be thought that he would not be unwilling to accept office. He was visited on May 13th by Lord Egremont who hinted at a ministerial office, but made it perfectly clear that the offer was to Hardwicke alone. Pitt and Temple had offended the king too deeply to be easily forgiven, and Newcastle was almost equally objectionable¹. Though Hardwicke refused to desert his friends, he was again visited by Egremont a month later; but on this occasion the latter was far more vague in his conversation, and, apparently, far less anxious for success. The difference in the tone adopted by the secretary of state may have been due to the fact that he regarded the enterprise as hopeless, but it is also possible that, in sounding Hardwicke, he was not acting in accordance with his own wishes or those of his colleagues, but executing the orders of the king. Bute was probably anxious to strengthen the administration, and diminish the influence of Grenville and Egremont²; and it is at least certain that when the latter visited Hardwicke for the third time on August 1st, to offer him the presidency of the council, it was against his own will, and in obedience to the royal commands³. This third attempt met with no greater success than its predecessors. Though the promise was made that Newcastle should be given one of the great court offices, nothing was said about Pitt, and the intention was clearly to exclude him. Hardwicke was too experienced a politician to fall into the trap prepared for him; and,

¹ Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 350—353, 369.

² Add. MS. 32949, f. 70.

³ *Grenville Papers*, II. 191.

though he did not mention Pitt's name, he made it perfectly plain that neither Newcastle nor he would take office without him¹.

Trifling and futile as these negotiations may appear, their importance is not inconsiderable. They show that the king was dissatisfied with his administration as it was; and, though his endeavours to win the support of Hardwicke had ended in failure, they had not been unⁱⁿstructive. George III had acquired information which would influence his future actions. He now knew that it was impossible to gain either Newcastle or Hardwicke without Pitt, but he did not yet know that it was impossible to gain Pitt without Newcastle. He was determined to effect some alteration in the administration. He had grown weary of the ministers who had mistaken the conditions upon which they had come into power. Their claim to be independent of Bute, who had allotted to them the posts which they occupied, was not to be tolerated. Moreover, as the ministry was unpopular in the country, and threatened by what might prove to be a formidable opposition, it is not surprising that the king thought of transforming it. But his search for recruits had not been successful, and if he was to drive out his present ministers, leaving himself at the mercy of the whig party, his last state might be worse than the first. If he fretted under the rule of George Grenville, he was not likely to enjoy greater freedom under a coalition ministry of Pitt and Newcastle. He seemed driven into a course from which escape was impossible, and spent the month of August in trying, with Bute's assistance, to find a way out of a difficulty which was largely of his own making.

The king and his favourite could not expect any

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 191; Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 369—372; Add. MS. 32950, f. 1, f. 16, f. 43.

assistance in this task from the ministers. Grenville and his colleagues left them to follow their own devices, in the hope that, failing to form an administration in accordance with their wishes, and fearing to entrust the crown to the opposition party, they would return to them humble and contrite¹. There was one traitor in the cabinet, and that was Shelburne. True to the rôle for which he had been cast, he was willing to serve the court against his colleagues, and it was to him that the king turned for help. Newcastle and Hardwicke had excluded themselves by their own act from the royal consideration; and negotiations were begun with Bedford and Pitt. This was either a desperate venture or a leap in the dark. Bedford was prepared to join the administration, and ready to serve with Pitt; but he was violently hostile to Bute, and refused to take office unless the latter was banished from the court and political life. In proscribing Bute, Bedford proscribed himself. It was Grenville's great offence that he objected to the political influence exercised by the favourite, and the Duke of Bedford, by showing that he was in sympathy with Grenville on this point, rendered himself ineligible for office. But if Bedford objected to Bute, Pitt objected to Bedford. The latter had been closely connected with the Peace of Paris, and Pitt refused to sit at council with the man who had signed so nefarious a treaty². Nor was Bedford alone condemned: Lord

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 83—88.

² Add. MS. 32951, f. 192; Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, I. 288. Bedford was not informed at the time that Pitt had objected to him, the latter's refusal being attributed to his connection with the whig party, though apparently this was not mentioned. (*Bedford Correspondence*, III. 236, 237; Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, I. 287.) For a general account of the negotiations, see Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, I. 283—288; *Grenville Papers*, II. 90—92, 204, 205; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 236—240; Add. MS. 32950, f. 65; *Ibid.* 32951, f. 192.

Gower and Lord Sandwich, who would be certain to be given office in an administration influenced by Bedford, were equally proscribed.

Failure had again attended the efforts of the king, but he had acquired additional information which he could put to an useful purpose. The Duke of Bedford was now out of the question, and thus the obstacle, which had stood in the way of Pitt's acceptance, was removed. He might now be willing to give a more favourable hearing to an offer from the king, but it still remained uncertain what conditions he would impose. There was a danger that he would demand, as the *sine quâ non* of his acceptance, that the leading members of the opposition should be given places in the cabinet and ministry. The king must have been aware by this time of the intimate relations between Pitt and the whigs; but the silence, which Pitt had maintained on this point, may have given birth to the hope that it was possible to separate him from his allies. The king found himself in a position from which advance or retreat was almost equally dangerous. To abandon the intention of changing the administration would be a confession of failure, and only serve to establish the authority of Grenville over the crown. To appeal once more to Pitt would be venturesome and dangerous, and might result in the return of the latter to power at the head of an united party, pledged to diminish the royal authority, and to undo the work which had been achieved since the beginning of the reign. Against the certain evil of continuing to endure George Grenville, the king had to weigh the dangers involved in an appeal to Pitt. Called upon to make a decision, which could not fail to have important results, he had every excuse for hesitation; and when on August 21st he told Grenville that he did not wish to change his

ministry but rather to strengthen it, he may have been speaking in absolute sincerity¹.

But on that very day Lord Egremont died, and, by his death, precipitated a political crisis, thus accomplishing more than he had ever performed in his lifetime. It was impossible for the cabinet to continue to exist in a maimed and crippled condition, without a president of the council², and with only one secretary of state. It was imperative that new ministers should be appointed, but, if Grenville was allowed to nominate them, his hold upon the government would be materially strengthened, and the royal authority sensibly restricted. It was better to run many risks than to submit to the tyranny of Grenville; and, unable to look for help elsewhere, the king, at this crisis of his fortunes, turned for assistance to Pitt.

The great commoner seemed to command the situation, but no one could say how he would use the advantage he possessed. He stood in alliance with Newcastle and Hardwicke who had been faithful to him when they had been approached by the king; and he was not likely to be so callously indifferent to party ties as to be unmindful of his whig friends. But how far that loyalty would carry him, whether it would compel him to demand the construction of a purely whig administration which would place the monarchy once more in leading strings, could not be known until he had declared himself. The happiest solution would be a compromise, by which Pitt satisfied the most pressing claims of his political allies, and the king escaped the danger of being handed over a prisoner to the whig oligarchy, flushed with triumph and burning for revenge. It was in the hope that some such arrange-

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 193.

² Lord Granville, the president of the council, had died in the previous January.

ment would be found possible, that the king took up the negotiation¹. On the evening of August 25th Bute and Pitt spent three hours in conversation together; but of what passed we know nothing². Pitt, however, must have made a favourable impression, for the king summoned him to an audience on August 27th.

The conversation between the king and Pitt on August 27th was followed by another, two days later. The accounts of these meetings, which have survived, were all compiled after the second interview; and, therefore, it is not improbable that events have been transposed³. This is unfortunate, inasmuch as it increases the difficulty of assigning a cause for the failure of the negotiation; but it would seem reasonable to imagine that the most important questions were discussed at the first meeting. Called upon to take office, Pitt was not prepared to desert Newcastle and his followers. He assured the king that he could only come into his service accompanied by the representatives of "the great whig families and persons which had been driven from his majesty's council and service, which it would be for his interest to restore⁴." Hardwicke was to be lord president⁵, the Duke of Devonshire to be restored to his former post of lord chamberlain⁶, Newcastle to receive the privy seal⁷, and Lord Rockingham

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 195, 196.

² Pitt asserted that he clearly explained to Bute his opinions, both in regard to the distribution of offices and the policy to be pursued; but the latter always denied this (*Grenville Papers*, II. 195).

³ It is true that the king saw Grenville on Sunday, August 28th, and gave him a general account of what had happened on the previous day; but Grenville did not learn any particulars until Monday evening (*Grenville Papers*, II. 197, note).

⁴ Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 378; Add. MS. 32950, f. 251, f. 321.

⁵ Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 375.

⁶ Add. MS. 32951, f. 101.

⁷ *Ibid.* 32951, f. 301.

to be first lord of the admiralty¹. Either Albemarle or Lord Granby was to be placed at the head of the army², and Pitt and Charles Townshend were to be secretaries of state³. In such an administration, the whig party would be well represented, and Pitt might feel that, having done his duty towards his allies, he could afford to indulge his own inclinations, and consider the prejudices of the king. When the latter asked that Oswald and Elliot, two of Bute's earliest supporters, should be allowed to retain their places in the administration, Pitt gave a low bow to signify his assent, and further agreed that Welbore Ellis should again have the post of vice-treasurer of Ireland⁴. It was, doubtless, equally pleasing to the king that Lord Shelburne was to be allowed to retain his place at the board of trade⁵.

The retention of Lord Shelburne, and the admission of certain of Bute's supporters into the subordinate offices, serve to show that Pitt did not see absolutely eye to eye with his whig friends. He had acted consistently with his declaration that the great political families should be well represented in any ministry, but he was not anxious to make himself the hero of a party victory, or preclude men from serving the crown because of their political connections. But, though friendship with Bute was not to be a bar to a place in the administration, and a party was not to be proscribed as the tories had been at the time of the Hanoverian succession, Pitt was determined that all those who had participated in the making of the Peace of Paris should be excluded from high ministerial office. He bluntly told the king that he "never could or would act with any minister who had a hand" in the peace⁶. By this declaration, Halifax,

¹ Add. MS. 32950, f. 312.

² *Ibid.* 32951, f. 192.

³ *Ibid.* f. 301.

⁴ *Ibid.* f. 101, f. 192.

⁵ *Ibid.* f. 301.

⁶ *Ibid.* f. 192.

Bute, Bedford, and Grenville were excluded from the effective cabinet¹. Against the Duke of Bedford, Pitt displayed a special animus, for when the king asked that the duke might be given some office, though not a ministerial one, the request was refused without hesitation². He also declined to serve with Lord Mansfield, and required that Pratt should be created a peer, and given a seat in the cabinet council³.

In regard to the measures which Pitt proposed to support, should he again take office, our information is more scanty. He was not in favour of the destruction but rather of the amendment and preservation of the recent treaty with France; and was anxious to curb the predominance of the Bourbon powers in Europe by an alliance between England and Prussia⁴. He did not, as far as we know, touch upon domestic politics in his conversation with the king, an omission which obviated the danger of a disagreement over the question of Wilkes. Amidst much that is doubtful, it is at least certain that, when Pitt left the king on August 27th, he felt confident of success. He visited Newcastle on the following day, and letters were despatched, summoning the whig leaders to town⁵. The hopes of Newcastle and his followers ran high: it seemed that, once more, they were to enjoy the delights of office, and prevail over those who had striven to banish them from political life. Disillusionment and disappointment were speedily to follow. When Pitt visited the king on Monday, August 29th, he encountered

¹ Add. MS. 32951, f. 192. Pitt was apparently willing to allow either Grenville or Halifax to have the office of paymaster of the forces, but this post did not confer the right of sitting in the inner cabinet (Add. MS. 32951, f. 301; Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 375—382).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*; Add. MS. 32952, f. 1.

⁴ Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 375—382; *Grenville Papers*, II. 197—201.

⁵ Add. MS. 32950, f. 251; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 171.

a reception very different from that which he had expected¹. The interview was brief and far less satisfactory². The king had changed his mind since Saturday: what he had then been ready to yield, he was now unwilling to grant. He did not so much state particular objections as display a spirit of general opposition; and brought the interview to an end by abruptly remarking "Well Mr Pitt, I see this won't do. My honour is concerned, and I must support it³."

Thus, when everything seemed to promise success, the negotiation was broken off, and men have wondered till the present time as to the cause of failure. The cloud of mystery, which invests the transactions of these few days, will never, probably, be absolutely dispelled. It is certain that both the king and Pitt were anxious to come to an understanding. The former had every inducement to yield, as far as possible, to Pitt's demands. He was on bad terms with his ministers, and had taken in hand the transformation of the administration against their will. Should failure attend his efforts, he would be more helpless than he had ever been before, and Grenville would be in a position from which he could dictate to his sovereign. That Pitt was willing and anxious to take office cannot be doubted. Inspired by no selfish lust of power, he was desirous of coming to the rescue of the country which he thought to be falling from that proud preeminence, to which he had raised her. He was willing to forget the many slights and insults he had suffered, and serve once more the king who had driven him from

¹ Add. MS. 32950, f. 298.

² Pitt described the meeting as lasting about an hour; Hardwicke gave the time as nearly two hours (Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 375—382; Add. MS. 32950, f. 298).

³ Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 380.

his council. This eagerness in both Pitt and the king, to arrive at a common understanding, adds to the difficulty of accounting for their failure to do so. Different and conflicting causes have been assigned for what seems so inexplicable, but, in the various accounts of the negotiation which have survived, it is easier to be certain of what is false than of what is true. It has been said that the negotiation failed because, at his second interview with the king, Pitt materially increased his demands, and the former found himself unable to grant what was asked. This statement, though it rests upon the unsupported word of George III¹, is sufficiently plausible to deserve discussion. On the day between his two meetings with the king, Pitt had been with the Duke of Newcastle, and it could easily be believed that the latter had induced him to make demands, on behalf of the whig party, which the king could not possibly fulfil. But there is no evidence that Newcastle was guilty of this blunder, and it is extremely unlikely that Pitt would have allowed himself to be influenced by a man whom he may occasionally have tolerated, but never could have liked. Moreover, on the same day that Pitt was with Newcastle, the king told Grenville that he had decided to break off the negotiation², and therefore, if Pitt showed himself more exacting on the following day, it could only have served to confirm the king in a decision which he had already taken.

It has also been said that the king was offended by the demand that the new administration must be predominantly whig³. It was rumoured that when he learnt that those, whom he had treated so badly, were to be his ministers once again, he shrank from entrusting power to

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 201.

² *Ibid.* 197—201.

³ *Ibid.* 197—201.

men who had so much to forgive, and so little reason to be forgiving. It has been plausibly argued that the formation of a whig ministry would undo all that George III and Bute had so laboriously achieved. The crown would once more be divested of all authority which would be transferred to the hands of the whig oligarchy. Once again, the principles of party government would be enforced; and the king obliged to choose as his servants only those whom Newcastle and his followers approved. No one would deny that George III was unwilling to put himself in the situation in which his grandfather had been at the close of his reign; but it may fairly be argued that the administration, as Pitt had sketched it, though predominantly, was not to be exclusively whig. Though all who had assisted to make the Peace of Paris were denied ministerial office, no proscription was placed upon the tories as a party. There was to be no rout of Bute's friends, no counterblast to the attack upon the opposition in the autumn of 1762¹. Neither Charles Townshend nor Pitt can be described as representative of the whig oligarchy, but they were to be the secretaries of state in the new administration; and, though Newcastle, Hardwicke and Devonshire were to be given office, the king had not objected to receiving them again in his service². It would be to the interest of Pitt to represent that his loyalty to his whig allies had been the cause of his undoing, but that he never did. "He never insinuated," wrote Newcastle, "that his negotiation miscarried, or that the difficulty arose, from any objection made to any of the persons who were named to his majesty³."

¹ Pitt "insisted only upon ten in the house of commons who had been turned out." (Add. MS. 32951, f. 192.)

² Add. MS. 32951, f. 192.

³ *Ibid.*

According to another theory, the rock of offence was the nomination of Lord Temple as first lord of the treasury. This was a story busily circulated by the followers of Grenville¹, and was likely enough to be readily believed. The king had no cause to love Temple who had caused great offence by his patronage of Wilkes, but, however credible the story may superficially appear, it does not stand the test of investigation. Pitt declared that it was the king who suggested Lord Temple for the treasury²; and there is no reason to doubt his word. He had no interest to serve in misrepresenting the king in this particular; and greater importance must be attached to his statement than to what was at best but a rumour.

In the face of so much confusion and so many contradictions, it is impossible to do more than advance a theory to account for the failure of the negotiation. A few days after his interviews with the king, Pitt informed Hardwicke that he could not understand the mishap³, but, some time later, he expressed the opinion that the responsibility rested with Bute⁴. From another source, Newcastle learnt that the king had refused to come to terms with Pitt because the latter declined to defend the peace and Bute⁵; and, according to Grenville, the favourite became frightened at the consequences of Pitt's return to power, and had brought pressure to bear upon the king to break off the negotiation⁶. Thus both Pitt and Grenville agreed in believing that Bute had played an influential and

¹ Add. MS. 32952, f. 1.

² Add. MS. 32951, f. 301; *Ibid.* 32952, f. 1; Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 375—382.

³ Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 375—382.

⁴ Add. MS. 32951, f. 192.

⁵ *Ibid.* f. 94.

⁶ *Grenville Papers*, II. 197—201.

decisive part, and there is some reason to think that they were correct in their surmise. Bute had genuine cause for alarm. Pitt had displayed a very strong animus against the peace, and had refused to admit into the inner cabinet any man who had helped to make what he regarded as a shameful treaty. It may be said that Bute, inasmuch as he had retired from the ministry, and was not prepared to take office again, would be unaffected by this proscription; but this is not exactly true. If Pitt's demands were fulfilled, a ministry would be formed, the effective portion of which consisted of those who had no share in making the peace with France. There was a real danger that the accession of Pitt to power might encourage a popular and parliamentary attack upon the men who were commonly supposed to have sacrificed the country; and he certainly would not lift a hand to save them from destruction. The days, when Bolingbroke and Oxford had trembled for their heads, were not so very distant, and Bute was not prepared to place himself in a similar predicament. He had no illusions as to the hatred he had incurred, or the mercy he might expect, and he was not guilty of exaggerated alarm if he felt that, with Pitt in power, he could no longer count upon safety in England. To save his favourite from the danger which threatened him, George III threw away the opportunity of giving the country a settled government by restoring to office the greatest statesman of his age. The greatness of England was weighed in the balance against the security of a Scotch nobleman, and was found wanting.

It may be urged against the truth of this theory that the king had known for many months past what Pitt thought of the peace; and that the latter, in the course of his conversations with the king, displayed no greater

antagonism to that measure than he had shown on previous occasions. This is doubtless true, but the ground of Bute's alarm was not Pitt's hostility to the peace, but his refusal to give any of those, who had taken part in making it, a ministerial office. An inner cabinet would be constructed, of which no member could be accused of having sacrificed the welfare of England: and, therefore, the ministers would be able to allow a parliamentary inquiry with perfect safety. It is difficult to understand why the king pressed the claims of the Duke of Bedford, who had so recently displayed animosity against the favourite, except it was done to insure that one member of the administration, if not of the cabinet, should be a partner with Bute in guilt.

It may also be objected that to reject Pitt, and to turn again to George Grenville, would by no means better Bute's position. The Scotch earl had sinned too deeply to be forgiven by Grenville, amongst whose virtues cannot be numbered generosity. It was certain that the triumph of Grenville would mean a sensible diminution of Bute's political influence; but it would also be a safeguard against a parliamentary inquiry into the Peace of Paris. In the eyes of the law, Grenville was partly responsible for the treaty with France; and, as long as he remained in power, Bute could count upon security. The tide of popular indignation against the treaty would certainly subside as time went on, and the attention of men was directed elsewhere; and the king would not be obliged always to endure George Grenville for fear of greater evils. When the memories of the peace had faded in men's minds, the king's day of emancipation would have come¹.

¹ In a document, dated "about 1766," an account is given of the negotiation which supports the theory advanced in the text. "Mr G. G.

If this theory be correct, and it cannot be stated as more than a theory, George III and Bute arrived at a momentous decision on Sunday, August 28th. If Pitt was allowed to form an administration, Bute might be called upon to meet a parliamentary inquiry into his conduct, and if Grenville was continued in power, the favourite's political influence would be destroyed. A statesman, willing to put his fate to the touch, would have chosen the first alternative: Bute ingloriously adopted the second. He allowed the man, against whom he had schemed and intrigued, to triumph; and the doom, he might have counted upon, was quick to come¹. One of the first

was made first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, April 16th, 1763, by the Earl of Bute's influence. In less than one month after his appointment to these offices, he gave umbrage to the Earl of Bute who had placed him in this high station. The Earl's jealousy was increased by an indiscreet letter which he received from Sir John Phillips, who delivered it as his opinion that Mr G. would abridge his influence. Lord Bute complained to one of his particular friends that Mr G. had proscribed him, and his conduct proved that he wished to remove him. In the month of August, 1763, Lord Bute advised the king to change his ministers, and recommended to his M—y to send for Mr Pitt who was very violent against all those who were concerned in making the peace, and insisted upon excluding them from H.M.'s service. The conference between the king and Mr Pitt was reported to Lord B., who was at a loss to form an administration, and upon advising with Sir Gilbert Elliot and Mr Jenkinson, he wrote a line to the king, wherein he said that, upon consulting two of his best friends, he thought it would be for his service to continue Mr G. in his employment. Whereupon the k. sent for Mr G. and gave him the strongest assurances of his protection; but Lord B. certainly intended his dismissal whenever a favourable occasion should offer. Mr G. would in all probability have been dismissed from his employment upon the close of the session in the spring of the year 1764, had it not been necessary for him to continue in office till the affairs relative to the North Britain and Wilkes were determined, and, as this was an unpopular business, Lord B. had no objection to its falling upon Mr G." (Add. MS. 34713, f. 277.)

¹ There is a piece of evidence, which, as it does not fit in with the theory stated above, ought to be mentioned. About the middle of

demands that Grenville made, when he learnt that he was to be continued in office, was that the secret influence, as he termed it, should cease; and the king, understanding the allusion, assured him that Bute had "desired to retire absolutely from all business whatsoever, that he would absent himself from the king for a time, 'till an administration, firmly established, should leave no room for jealousy against him¹."

Thus the main result of the tangled negotiations, which had occupied the month of August, was to establish Grenville in office more firmly than ever. For the sake of the man he liked, the king had agreed to tolerate the man he detested; and Grenville had the ball at his feet. Lord Shelburne, who had been a thorn in the side of his colleagues, and had represented Bute in the cabinet, determined to retire from office. Involved as he had been in the recent negotiations, no other course lay open to him; and, if the king resented his resignation, it could only have been because he was unwilling to see another office placed at the disposal of the ministers². Shelburne's example was followed by Lord Mansfield who asked to be excused from further attendance at the cabinet council³. New members had to be chosen to fill the gaps caused by death and resignation; and it was not likely that the king would be able to influence the selection. The field of

October, 1763, Elliot told Grenville that, on the morning of Monday, August 29th, Bute sent a message to Pitt, saying that if the latter would abandon the idea of giving the treasury to Temple, the negotiation might yet succeed (*Grenville Papers*, II. 201, 202). This story is not supported from any other source, and, before it can be accepted, some means must be found for discrediting Pitt's emphatic declaration that it was the king who proposed Lord Temple.

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 201.

² *Grenville Papers*, II. 203; Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, I. 296—298.

³ *Grenville Papers*, II. 205.

choice had been narrowed by recent events. Pitt, the whig opposition, and the followers of Bute were now out of the question; and the Bedford faction saw its political value enhanced by the lack of eligible candidates. The banishment of Bute removed an obstacle from Bedford's path. There was no longer any reason for him to remain in retirement, and he consented to take the office of lord president of the council. His follower, Lord Sandwich, was promoted from the office of first lord of the admiralty to be secretary of state; and the post he vacated was given to Lord Egmont. Lord Shelburne was replaced at the board of trade by Lord Hillsborough who was destined to play a prominent and unenviable part in the unhappy quarrel with the American colonies¹.

It is open to question whether the ministry had gained any access of strength by the reorganisation. By the nation it was no more respected than before; and the funds, which had begun to rise on the rumour that Pitt was going to take office, continued to fall². Nor were the new members of the administration likely to add to its popularity or dignity. The Peace of Paris hung like a mill-stone round Bedford's neck; and the character of Sandwich has been depicted in savage colours by Gray in an immortal lampoon. Lack of harmony and union prevailed among the ministers as of old. Power was in the hands of Grenville, Halifax, Sandwich and Bedford, the last two being members of that political faction which earned and deserved an unenviable notoriety as "The Bloomsbury gang." No sooner had Bedford taken office than he raised the question of the distribution of the

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 108—112, 115—117, 206; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 238.

² P.R.O., *Foreign State Papers, Miscellaneous*, 30th September, 1763; *Grenville Papers*, II. 132—134.

government patronage. Though willing that the disposal of the offices belonging to the house of commons should be left entirely to Grenville, he urged that "to others, the rest of the king's ministers should also recommend," a suggestion to which Grenville was not willing to agree. An appeal was made to the king who privately informed Grenville that he would only act upon his recommendations, an understanding which was, naturally, not revealed to the other ministers¹. In the hope, perhaps, of maintaining the divisions in the cabinet, the king gave Grenville every assurance of support against the intrigues of his colleagues²; and he needed all the assistance he could get. Early in November, Lord Halifax frankly admitted the perilous position of the administration, divided as it was, and surrounded by so many dangers³. Indeed, the king could afford to indulge a contemptuous toleration of the man he disliked. Grenville was not in a position from which he could threaten the crown, and it was well to keep him in office, for there was work for him to do. Wilkes must be destroyed, and the opposition humbled; and fate had chosen Grenville to attempt the accomplishment of these tasks.

While an administration, discredited at home, disregarded abroad, and weakened by intrigue and dissension, maintained itself in power because the king had failed to form a ministry which would suit his purpose better, the opposition was preparing for the struggle which would begin when parliament met. The whig leaders still adhered to their conviction that success was unobtainable unless Pitt joined in the attack upon the government⁴: he was the indispensable man, without whom nothing could

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 206, 207.

² *Grenville Papers*, II. 209.

³ *Grenville Papers*, II. 219.

⁴ Add. MS. 32951, f. 101, f. 331.

be done. Yet, valuable as his assistance would be, the whigs could not afford to abandon opposition in order to obtain it. The stimulus, that comes from fighting, was necessary in order to hold the party together. An opposition, which did nothing, which remained silent in the face of a triumphant administration, would not be likely to win supporters, or keep those it had already gained. Pitt must be persuaded to declare a policy, and raise a standard round which men might rally. His allies were prepared to excuse him from frequent attendance at parliament, and ready to make allowances for his ill-health; but there must be no misconception of his true position, and all men must know that he was the leader of the party opposed to the court¹.

Strenuous efforts were made to induce Pitt to play such a part. Newcastle, Cumberland, and Devonshire endeavoured in turn to convince him, but in vain. He could not bring himself to approve an organised opposition to the government of the day: such a policy seemed to him to partake of the nature of faction. He did not believe that an opposition party was an essential part of the machinery of constitutional government; and shrank from opposing the ministers in and out of season. He was ready to attack the government upon certain points of great importance, such as the questions of parliamentary privilege and foreign policy; but to minor matters he professed himself indifferent; and, were the opposition to make these subjects of debate, it must be done without his assistance². He was ready to fight a series of duels, but was not prepared to carry on a campaign; and it was in vain that his allies attempted to shake him in his

¹ Add. MS. 32951, f. 1; *Ibid.* 35428, f. 64.

² Add. MS. 32951, f. 101, f. 192, f. 311, f. 395, f. 403; *Ibid.* 32952, f. 147.

determination. He refused to attend the meetings or the dinners of the opposition party¹; and, as the time for the meeting of parliament came near, he seemed to draw further apart from the whig leaders. A last attempt to induce him to place himself at the head of the opposition was made by the Duke of Devonshire², but it met with no greater success than those which had preceded it; and the whigs were left bemoaning the loss of one who could have given them victory, and upon whom they had built all their hopes. Charles Townshend was not the only member of the party who was angry with the man who had deserted them in their hour of need.

When Pitt declared against opposition, the whigs thought that they detected the cause of his reluctance. His conversations with the king in August had left their mark upon him. He had failed to form an administration, and was probably chagrined at his failure³; but he consoled himself by believing that he had made an agreeable impression upon the king. It was in vain that his allies assured him that he was the most unpopular man at court⁴. He refused to be shaken in his conviction, and though, but a few weeks before, he had thought of himself as a political outcast, he was now confident that he had secured the goodwill of the crown. The whigs believed that he feared to embark upon a career of opposition lest he should forfeit the royal favour so recently acquired. This view of his conduct has found support from a distinguished writer⁵, but it would appear to be based upon a misunderstanding of Pitt's real objections to an organised assault upon the government. It has already

¹ Add. MS. 32952, f. 166.

² Add. MS. 32952, f. 272, f. 340.

³ Add. MS. 32951, f. 8, f. 14.

⁴ Add. MS. 32951, f. 14, f. 101; *Ibid.* 32952, f. 166, f. 184.

⁵ Dr A. von Ruville, *William Pitt, Graf von Chatham*, III. 150 ff.

been seen that he was prepared to attack the administration on those questions which he considered of sufficient importance to justify opposition, and he was found to be true to his word. His defence of parliamentary privilege, and his attack upon general warrants, were not likely to prejudice the king in his favour; and it cannot be shown that he was prepared to sacrifice a single conviction for the sake of securing the approval of the crown. Moreover, before he had seen the king in August, and while he still regarded himself as disliked at court, he had displayed an aversion to a formal opposition¹; and, therefore, the impression made upon him by his interviews with the king, though it possibly served to induce him to continue a line of policy upon which he was already determined, cannot be said to have done more. It was no petty desire for promotion that drew Pitt apart from his allies, but a fundamental difference of constitutional opinion. The whigs held the modern view of the functions of an opposition. They believed it to be their duty to obtain admission into the service of the crown as soon as possible; and, to attain this end, they must succeed in gaining the confidence of parliament and discrediting the administration. For this reason, all the actions of the ministers in power must be subjected to hostile criticism, their virtues minimised, and their defects exaggerated; nor might any slackness be shown in the attack until the enemy was overthrown². They valued the strength which comes of cohesion, and realised that they would not succeed unless they stood before the world as an united party, pledged to the maintenance of the same principles. To such a policy Pitt could not agree. He appreciated the need of strong

¹ Add. MS. 32950, f. 65.

² Bolingbroke shared this conception of the duties of an opposition. Sichel's *Bolingbroke and his Times: The Sequel*, p. 259.

government, and could not consent to be for ever thwarting an administration, thus hampering it in the execution of the task which it had to perform. This seemed to him to be factious. He was always ready to condemn the ministers when he thought they acted wrongly; but he could not consent to be for ever harassing and hindering them. He refused to associate himself with the whigs because they desired him to render it impossible for the ministers to govern. To such a scheme, the success of which would imperil the safety of the state, he declined to be a party. An impassable gulf separated him from those who wished to be his followers; and the whigs were compelled to meet parliament and the ministers without the leader they had chosen.

Their hopes, which had risen so high, seemed dashed to the ground, and worse was to follow. If Pitt would not be a leader, he might still remain an ally; but even this was by no means certain. Charles Yorke was to provide a cause for embarrassment and division. In response to pressure from Newcastle, he had resigned his office in the administration, and joined the opposition. He took this step reluctantly, and after much hesitation. In his farewell interview with the king, he burst into tears; and seldom has an opposition received a more unwilling recruit¹. It may also be said that seldom has an opposition received a more dangerous ally. Yorke had set his heart upon becoming lord chancellor, and he had not abandoned his ambition in deserting the court. But he knew that Pitt had determined to place Pratt upon the woolsack, and, therefore, regarded the former as his enemy². Moreover, he had committed himself on the question of

¹ Add. MS. 32951, f. 249; *Ibid.* 32952, f. 51; *Grenville Papers*, II. 218, 219.

² Add. MS. 35430, f. 212; *Ibid.* 32952, f. 147.

parliamentary privilege, and, though he had abandoned the ministry, still adhered to the views he had expressed when attorney general. It is difficult to exaggerate the seriousness of this difference of opinion. Pitt had already made up his mind to attack the ministers for their conduct to Wilkes, and the whigs found themselves obliged to determine whether they would support him or Charles Yorke. Besides Hardwicke, who might naturally be expected to be in sympathy with his son, both the Duke of Devonshire and Charles Townshend agreed with Yorke¹. Newcastle, fearful of offending Pitt, and yet influenced by his friends, could not make up his mind, and while the Duke of Cumberland thought that a question, on which there was so much divergence, ought to be avoided, Lord Rockingham believed that the duty of the opposition was to support its most recent ally². There is something to be said for Pitt's opinion that it would have been better for the opposition if Charles Yorke had never joined it³.

Thus, if the administration was weak and divided, the opposition found itself in an equally distressed condition. Parliament was to meet on November 15th, and the ministers had strained every nerve to secure an impressive majority. It was reported that bribes had been lavishly distributed, and that one member of the lower house had been summoned back from Ratisbon in order to swell the government majority⁴. The ministers contemplated a triumphant session, and expected to reduce the opposition to silence before the end of the year⁵. But hope was not

¹ Add. MS. 32952, f. 97, f. 195.

² Add. MS. 32952, f. 119, f. 166, f. 195.

³ Add. MS. 32952, f. 147, f. 166.

⁴ P.R.O., *Foreign State Papers, Miscellaneous*, October 28th and November 22nd, 1763.

⁵ P.R.O., *Foreign State Papers, Miscellaneous*, October 21st, 1763; Add. MS. 32952, f. 51.

dead in the hearts of all the whigs. Newcastle believed that he could count upon one hundred and forty votes in the house of commons, and that the number would increase as the session continued¹. The ministers were certain to possess a majority at the opening of parliament, but they were known to be unpopular with the nation, and an opposition, which presented a bold front to the enemy, might easily gain recruits. But, with Pitt refusing to lead, and differences of opinion destroying the harmony of the whig camp, the outlook was far from promising; and it was in no spirit of triumph that the whigs prepared to meet the administration.

When parliament assembled on November 15th, the campaign against Wilkes was immediately begun in both houses. When he had been arrested, his papers had been seized, and amongst them had been discovered an obscene parody of Pope's *Essay on Man*, and a blasphemous paraphrase of the *Veni Creator*. Extracts from these works were read to an astonished house of lords by Lord Sandwich, whose motion, that they should be declared blasphemous and indecent, was unanimously carried. To the *Essay on Woman* had been appended notes, in imitation of those by Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, to Pope's poem; and the upper house agreed that this was a violation of its privileges. It is impossible to doubt that the ministerial attack upon these shameless productions was inspired, not by a desire to safeguard the interests of public morality, but by an intention to discredit a political opponent. Offensive as the *Essay on Woman* may have been, only a few copies had been printed, and it had never been intended to circulate beyond the small circle of Wilkes' friends. The means,

¹ P.R.O., *Foreign State Papers, Miscellaneous*, November 4th, November 11th, 1763.

by which the ministers had obtained a copy, were very questionable; and the spectacle of Sandwich, as the scourger of vice and the champion of virtue, was more likely to cause amusement than edification. Yet the ministers had succeeded in discrediting Wilkes to a certain degree. He, who had been hailed as a martyr for liberty, was shown to be but of ordinary clay, and capable of amusing his leisure moments by the production of indecent literature. It was not an age of squeamish virtue or restrictive prejudices; but there must have been many who, though they would have supported the man who attacked and libelled the government, might hesitate to countenance the author of an indecent poem. The opposition in the upper house, unaware of the discovery made by the ministers, was taken by surprise, and found themselves in a position which they could not defend; and, though they rallied slightly when the address to the crown was voted, there was no doubt that the government had been victorious in the first encounter¹.

A more fiercely contested but equally disastrous battle for the opposition was fought in the house of commons. The debate continued until the early hours of the morning. Much time had been wasted, and many speeches made, before George Grenville was able to read the king's message requesting the commons to consider the case of Wilkes. In former days, the lower house had often defied the crown in defence of its own members, but now, in obedience to the royal will, it voted No. 45 *North Briton* a scandalous and seditious libel, tending to foment traitorous insurrections. An amendment, to omit the concluding words of the motion, was lost by a large majority.

¹ P.R.O., *Foreign State Papers, Miscellaneous*, November 15th, November 18th, 1763; Walpole's *Memoirs*, 1.—245 seq.; Walpole's *Letters*, v. 384—391; *Parl. History*, xv.

The big battalions were on the side of the ministers, but the opposition, though weak, had fought stubbornly, and had gained an important recruit in General Conway, the brother of Lord Hertford. The defeat was of little consequence for it had been foreseen and discounted: it was of far greater moment that, at the very opening of the parliamentary campaign, the opposition had failed to act as an united body. All the members of Lord Hardwicke's family supported the administration, and Pitt openly attacked Charles Yorke for his interpretation of the law of parliamentary privilege¹. The great commoner adopted the same detached attitude on the day following, when the address was voted, going out of his way to denounce the party system as the ruin of the country, and describing himself as standing single and alone. A contemporary reckoned that this speech was worth fifty thousand pounds to the ministers; and this estimate was, perhaps, not unduly large². Those, who had wavered as to which party to serve, would not be inclined to throw in their lot with the whigs, seeing that Pitt had so publicly dissociated himself from them; and it must be admitted that the ministers had every encouragement to continue their attack upon Wilkes.

That unfortunate victim of the royal hatred was now confined to his room by a wound received in a duel with Martin, one of the many whom he had insulted in the pages of the *North Briton*. In consequence of this, the further discussion of his case was postponed to November

¹ P.R.O., *Foreign State Papers Miscellaneous*, Nov. 18th, 1763; *Grenville Papers*, II. 162, 223; Hist. MSS. Comm. Lothian MSS., pp. 247, 248; Walpole's *Letters*, v. 384—391; Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 249 seq.; *Parl. History*, xv.

² *Grenville Papers*, II. 164, 165, 223—225; Hist. MSS. Comm. Lothian MSS., pp. 247, 248.

23rd; but, when the house of commons assembled on that day, it was discovered that Wilkes was still unable to attend. It, therefore, became necessary to decide whether there should be a further postponement. The opposition pressed for delay, and presented an united front to the enemy. When the house divided, the ministers had a majority, but the three sons of Lord Hardwicke were in the minority with Pitt, and, according to an eye-witness, the latter's "look and gesture of joy was the most remarkable thing in the world¹." The opposition had been outvoted, but it had succeeded in reducing the usual ministerial majority by fifty, and Charles Yorke had spoken and voted with Pitt². Great were the rejoicings amongst the whigs; but the time for union had not yet come. When, on the day following, the house voted that parliamentary privilege did not cover seditious libel, and thus left Wilkes to the mercy of the courts of law, the cleavage of opinion in the opposition appeared in a more aggravated form than ever. Charles Yorke made a violent speech in support of the motion, and was answered by Pitt who, leaning upon crutches, and swathed in flannel, spoke for nearly two hours. Conway voted against the government, but the ministers secured a substantial triumph; and it was agreed to communicate the resolution to the upper house at a conference³. No opposition was to be expected from the peers who agreed to the resolution of the commons on November 29th⁴.

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 228; Add. MS. 32953, f. 16.

² Walpole's *Letters*, v. 397—401; *Grenville Papers*, II. 228; Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 258, 259.

³ Add. MS. 32953, f. 35; P.R.O., *Foreign State Papers Miscellaneous*, Nov. 25th, 1763; *Grenville Papers*, II. 229; Walpole's *Letters*, v. 397—401, 411—415; Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 259 seq.; *Parl. History*, xv.

⁴ *Grenville Papers*, II. 230; Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 261 seq.; Walpole's *Letters*, v. 401—404; *Parl. History*, xv.

Thus, before the end of November, the administration had accomplished the most important part of its work, and the expulsion of Wilkes from the house of commons, which took place on January 19th, 1764, was only the logical outcome of all that had gone before. The whigs had been routed and discredited; and their disgrace was not that they had failed to save a popular hero, but that they had omitted to settle their differences before entering upon the fray. Torn asunder by internal dissensions, they had been rendered impotent for decisive action. Charles Yorke and Pitt had openly opposed one another; and Newcastle had refused to sign the protest of the peers against the limitation of parliamentary privilege because of his friendship with Hardwicke¹. The Duke of Devonshire, disgusted by Pitt's conduct, threatened to retire from political life unless the latter mended his behaviour²; Charles Townshend and Lord Temple were not on friendly terms, and Charles Yorke, supported by his family, still cherished designs upon the chancellorship³. Thus something very much like the confusion after the rout prevailed in the camp of the opposition. The Wilkes case had proved a very apple of discord, and the ministers acted wisely in prolonging the discussion of that question⁴. The whigs would not recover the ground they had lost until they had discovered a point of attack upon which

¹ "There was a meeting yesterday at the Duke of Devonshire's to consider about protesting. The Duke of Devonshire and I found that they were all for it. My Lord Temple produced a draught, which, to do him justice, was originally less liable to objection than I imagined it would be.....After that, I stated my own present and former situation: the valuable connections which I had, and wish and desire that, on that account, their lordships would feel so much for me, that they would approve of my declining to sign any protest upon this occasion." Newcastle to Charles Yorke, December 1st, 1763 (Add. MS. 32953, f. 145).

² Add. MS. 32954, f. 15.

³ Add. MS. 32954, f. 62, f. 233.

⁴ Add. MS. 32954, f. 123.

they all were agreed, and which Pitt approved¹. At one time Newcastle contemplated elevating the private character of Lord Sandwich to the dignity of a party question; and those, curious in the manners and morals of the eighteenth century, may regret that this scheme was never executed². Bearing in affectionate remembrance the successful attack upon the cyder tax, the opposition attempted to renew the onslaught on that obnoxious imposition; but its efforts had no other consequence than the appointment of a committee to suggest means for improving that measure³. Salvation was to come, however, and a triumph to be enjoyed, all the greater because of the previous humiliation.

On the first day of the session, Wilkes had been prepared to complain of the breach of parliamentary privilege he had suffered in his person, but an opportunity had not been given him; and, now that he was expelled from the house, and obliged to flee the country, there were members of the opposition ready to undertake the task for him. The ministry, unable to refuse the request, agreed to allow the complaint to be heard on February 13th, and the opposition determined to seize the opportunity to raise the question of general warrants. This was, undoubtedly, a master stroke of policy. General warrants, though their use could be supported by recent precedents, had always been regarded as dubious expedients, and Pratt had lately declared them to be illegal. In face of this judicial decision, the ministers could hardly justify the means they had taken to arrest Wilkes; but, on the other hand, they could hardly be expected to confess publicly that they had broken the law. Thus, placed between the horns of a dilemma, they were called

¹ Add. MS. 32954, f. 76.

² Add. MS. 32954, f. 62.

³ Walpole's *Letters*, v. 437—446, 449—454.

upon to meet the attack of an united opposition. For the great discovery had been made and an article of faith revealed to which Pitt and the whigs could equally subscribe. The former was known to be enthusiastic in his opposition to general warrants, and Charles Yorke was of the same mind. The schism, which had been productive of so much harm, seemed about to be healed; and, though it remained uncertain how Charles Townshend would act, this was of little consequence, inasmuch as his frivolity and waywardness had deprived him of all weight¹.

The opposition was rallied for the fight, and steps were taken to secure a large attendance². The principal men of the whig party met to decide upon a course of action, and a motion was framed and agreed upon³. The debate on February 13th proved, however, uneventful. More than four hours were occupied in taking evidence of the use of general warrants since the revolution; but, in spite of the tediousness of the subject, the house remained full until a comparatively late hour. When, at half past ten o'clock, Lord Frederick Campbell moved the adjournment, his motion was rejected by nearly three hundred and fifty votes. But no sooner had it been decided to continue the debate than the members began to troop out in search of refreshment; and, as it was useless to harangue half-empty benches, the house adjourned shortly before midnight⁴. The debate was resumed on the following day, and continued without interruption until seven o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, February 15th. Evidence continued to be taken until past

¹ Add. MS. 32955, f. 434, f. 448.

² Add. MS. 32955, f. 434.

³ Add. MS. 32955, f. 448.

⁴ Add. MS. 32955, f. 456, f. 458, f. 460, f. 462; Walpole's *Memoirs*, I. 286, 287.

midnight; and a new day had already begun when Sir William Meredith rose to introduce the resolution upon which the opposition had agreed. He moved that general warrants were illegal, and that their use against members of parliament constituted a breach of privilege. Round these two points the battle raged until seven o'clock in the morning. As the hours passed by, weariness began to tell upon the members, and Charles Yorke moved that the house should adjourn. To this the ministers were willing enough to agree, provided that a motion discharging the complaint against those implicated in the arrest of Wilkes should be put immediately after the adjournment had been voted. The opposition, however, desired that both questions should be adjourned, and a motion to that effect was only lost by ten votes. A supporter of the administration then moved to discharge the complaint of breach of privilege, and was answered by Pitt who broke into a panegyric on liberty. A second motion for adjournment was then made by the opposition, and was lost by twenty-four votes. This ended the contest: the question for discharging the complaint was immediately put, and carried without a division¹.

As the jaded members streamed out into the cold grey light of a winter's morning, they must have pondered over the scene through which they had just passed. Never before had the ministry been pressed so hard, or the opposition come so near to victory. Men, who had consistently supported the administration, had voted with the whigs, and Newcastle believed that the ministers would have had a narrower majority still, if some of his supporters had not been prevented from attending the

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 261—264, 490, 491; *Walpole's Letters*, VI. 1—12; *Walpole's Memoirs*, I. 287 seq.

debate¹. But the joy, which prevailed in the whig camp, was not due only to the temporary increase in their numerical strength: it was a source of far deeper satisfaction that Pitt, Charles Yorke, and Charles Townshend had fought side by side in the battle. The divisions, which had crippled the action of the opposition, seemed healed; and a victory might still be won². The motion condemning general warrants had been adjourned till Friday, February 17th; and the winning of a few more supporters might mean a whig triumph. Men's hopes and fears ran high; and in the city, which was enthusiastic for Wilkes and liberty, elaborate preparations were made for a bonfire and illuminations, should the ministry be defeated³.

The debate, which began on Friday, February 17th, lasted until close upon six o'clock on the following morning. Much time was spent in proposing amendments to Meredith's resolution; and two or three hours had been occupied in this fashion before the contest really opened by Norton, the attorney general, moving to adjourn the question for four months. With needless offensiveness and uncommon brutality, he declared that, were he a judge, he would treat a resolution of the house of commons upon a point of law with as much respect as he would treat the opinion of a drunken porter. He was answered by Yorke who explained in self-defence that he had never seen the warrant issued against Wilkes, until after it had been executed. Both Charles Townshend and Pitt joined in the debate, though the latter was ill and suffering; and, when the house divided, the opposition numbered two hundred and eighteen, and

¹ Add. MS. 32956, f. 7.

² Add. MS. 32956, f. 7, f. 83.

³ Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 1—12.

the ministerialists two hundred and thirty-two¹. This was a triumphant close to a week of triumphs and lengthy sittings. The ministers, accustomed to majorities in three figures, found themselves carrying divisions by thirties and twenties and sometimes less. Those, upon whom they had been accustomed to rely, had deserted them at the critical moment; and, discredited in reputation and diminished in strength, they were threatened by an united opposition, full of hope and vigour. Pitt, pining for further battle, was emphatic in his approval of Charles Yorke, and declared that no proposal must be made "which could either renew former points in which we might have differed amongst ourselves, or bring on any point in which we could possibly differ now²."

When everything promised so well, it is not a little surprising that nothing was done. Pitt was anxious for the struggle to continue, and there could be no doubt that now was the time for the opposition to press the onslaught home. Yet the days passed by, and the ministry continued to enjoy immunity from attack; and, when parliament rose on April 19th, Grenville and his colleagues were left in possession of the field. The tide had not been taken at the flood, and by their inaction the whigs had strengthened Grenville's position, and enabled him to recover the ground that he had lost. As chancellor of the exchequer he introduced the budget on March 9th, and won the hearts of the country gentlemen who loudly applauded the man who was able to pay off debts without imposing new taxes³. Politicians have

¹ Add. MS. 32956, f. 19, f. 21, f. 37; *Grenville Papers*, II. 266, 267; Walpole's *Letters*, VI. 1—12.

² Add. MS. 32956, f. 83, f. 103.

³ Add. MS. 32957, f. 230. "However absurd this flattering incense is," wrote Newcastle to Legge, "Mr Grenville has certainly, for this

proverbially fickle memories, and, when nothing was done to thwart or hinder the administration, when the leaders of the opposition were conspicuous by their absence, and appeared to have withdrawn from the contest in the hour of victory, men tended to minimise the importance of the encounter over general warrants, and to rally to those who, even if they had been hard pressed, had not been defeated.

Few would deny that it was a tactical blunder on the part of the opposition to remain inactive; but any other course of action presented serious difficulties. There were some who were adverse to making any fresh attack upon the ministry so late in the session¹, and those, who thought differently, found it extremely difficult to discover a suitable point of assault². Nor were these the only obstacles in the path of united action. Pitt had endured that week of lengthy sittings at the cost of much bodily suffering; and, when the struggle was over, he took to his bed³. For some days Charles Yorke was secluded by the death of his father, Lord Hardwicke. This event had been long expected, and, as Hardwicke lay dying, preparations were made for the election of a new high steward of the university of Cambridge. The court candidate was Lord Sandwich, the secretary of state, but there was a large party in the university in favour of Hardwicke's son and successor, Lord Royston. Hardwicke died on March 6th, and the contest at Cambridge began in earnest. It was carried on with all that vigour and resource so often displayed in university politics.

time, gained some credit by his performance, owing entirely to the absence of those who could and would have exposed the falseness or futility of every part of his propositions or assertions." *Ibid.*

¹ Add. MS. 32957, f. 230.

² Add. MS. 32957, f. 239.

³ Add. MS. 32956, f. 74; Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 20—23, 28—31.

The members of a learned society are commonly supposed to be detached from the world, and ignorant of the ways of men; but, on this occasion at least, they showed themselves a match for politicians, and, though their learning may have been small, their artifice was great. Newcastle, as chancellor of the university, threw himself into the fight, believing that, in helping to defeat Sandwich, he was assisting to destroy the administration. The battle, which should have been fought in parliament, was transferred to Cambridge, and when Charles Townshend ought to have been attacking Grenville's budget, he was winning the votes of members of the senate¹.

Thus various circumstances combined to render the opposition inactive; and the ministers were able to finish the session free from serious molestation. Nor did they model their conduct upon their enemies and remain idle. Without delay they set to work to break up the ranks of their opponents. It was rumoured that overtures had been made to Lord George Sackville who had played a prominent part in the opposition to general warrants²; and the Duke of Bedford approached the new Lord Hardwicke and his brother, Charles Yorke. Hardwicke showed himself inclined to come to terms with the court, and Charles Townshend, realising that he was a younger brother, and how little there was to be gained in opposition, was not unwilling to be reconciled to George Grenville³. Thus it may be said that the session closed upon a drawn battle. The administration had escaped

¹ Add. MS. 32957, f. 5, f. 87. See Appendix II.

² Add. MS. 32956, f. 168.

³ Add. MS. 35361, f. 95. With commendable frankness, Townshend informed the Duke of Devonshire "that he was a younger brother, and if nothing was to be made out of opposition, or no active measures pursued, he would lie by this summer, and consider himself at liberty to take what part would be most convenient to him." *Ibid.*

defeat, but the whigs had shown how formidable they could be, when united amongst themselves and led by Pitt. If the latter remained firm in his intention to play a leading part in politics, and nothing happened to alienate him from the whigs, the next session might see the efforts of the opposition crowned with success.

But, for the time being, punishment and disgrace constituted the lot of those who had dared to oppose the court. Because Shelburne had voted against the limitation of parliamentary privilege, he was dismissed from his post of aide-de-camp to the king, and a similar fate befell Barré and Calcraft. But the greatest offender of all was Conway. A lord of the bedchamber and an officer in the army, he had acted with the opposition throughout the session, and was consequently deprived of both his posts. He was spared until parliament had risen, but this clemency, if so it can be called, was due, not to the king who fretted at the delay, but to Grenville who feared to offend Conway's friends and relations¹. To deprive men of office in the army, because of their actions in parliament, was a violation of the privilege of freedom of speech, though not without precedent in the previous reign; and, when such were the penalties inflicted upon those who refused to take their orders from the court, it is not surprising that the opposition found it difficult both to gain and keep adherents.

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 162, 230, 231.

CHAPTER V.

THE FALL OF GEORGE GRENVILLE.

PARLIAMENT did not meet again until the following Jannary: and, therefore, the hostilities between the ministry and the opposition ceased for a while. But in politics, as in war, an armistice may be as decisive as a campaign; and it was imperative for both parties in the contest to employ the time, thus given, in preparing for the struggle which seemed certain to be renewed when parliament re-assembled.

At the close of the last session the ministers had lived with the fear of disaster before their eyes; and, though they had managed to survive, the glory of the battle lay with those who had suffered defeat. The whigs had failed to carry the day, but they had come far nearer to victory than had ever been expected, and had fought in the cause dear to the heart of Pitt. Never, since the opposition had first been formed, had it seemed so united and so formidable. The old causes of dissensions appeared to have been destroyed or forgotten; and the administration might well be called upon to endure the assaults of a party, burning to revenge the indignities it had suffered, elated by the hope of victory, and led by the most popular politician of the day. There must have been many who expected the next parliamentary session to be decisive of the fate of the ministry. It was to be so, but not in the way which had been anticipated. Grenville and his colleagues were

to be driven from office by the king and not by the whigs. An administration was to be formed in which Pitt had no place, and to which he refused his confidence, though composed of those who had acted with him in opposition. The downfall of Grenville and the formation of the Rockingham administration was a royal and not a whig triumph; and the history of England might have been different if Grenville's place had been taken by Pitt supported by the whig party. To understand how it was that this did not happen, it is necessary to know the inner history of the opposition after the month of April, 1764.

To keep the party together, and to establish intimate and confidential relations with Pitt, were the tasks to which Newcastle and his friends addressed themselves. The strength of the opposition must be maintained, and, if possible, increased. In the interval of peace, the excitement, born of the contest, must be preserved. Neither the ministers nor the public must be allowed to forget that the opposition still existed, ready to renew the struggle with the administration at a fitting opportunity. But, in addition to all this, it was necessary for the whigs to decide upon a programme of attack; and this was by far the most difficult part of their work. They had come near to triumph in the last session because they had chosen to harass the ministry upon the question of general warrants: and better ground could hardly have been selected. But their success had been due far less to their own strength than to the popularity of the cause which they had espoused, and to the active part played by Pitt. It would not be easy to discover another question presenting the same facilities for attack; and, yet without one, the opposition might only too easily slip back into that slough of despond from which it had but lately emerged. Though Charles Townshend had many faults he did not lack

political insight; and he saw, perhaps more clearly than his contemporaries, how perilous was the position of the whigs. He tried to convince Newcastle that, when the parliament met again, the opposition would be found to have lost in strength, inasmuch as there would be "no general warrants to arraign, no extraordinary measures, and no grounds of debate but the army, the navy, and the several disputable speculations which may occur about the state of the debt and the condition of public credit¹."

The warning was timely, nor was it passed by unheeded. When the whig leaders met at Claremont, early in May, 1764, a programme of opposition was drawn up and unanimously approved. It was arranged that, when parliament reassembled, the opposition, in addition to reviving the question of general warrants, should attack the administration for dismissing military officers for votes given in parliament; and criticise the foreign and financial policy of the government².

Doubtless it was wise of the whigs to constitute themselves the champions of the parliamentary privilege of freedom of speech, seeing that Pitt was known to be angry at Conway's dismissal³; but it is more open to doubt whether they were well advised to revive the subject of general warrants. Popular as that question had been when first introduced by the opposition, a revival could hardly be attended with equal success. It might be said that the whigs were more anxious to overthrow the government than to safeguard the constitution; and those, who had deserted the administration when the question was first mooted, might be found supporting the government when it was revived. Nor did an attack

¹ Phillimore's *Life of Lord Lyttelton*, II. 654; Add. MS. 32958, f. 248.

² Add. MS. 32958, f. 307.

³ Phillimore's *Lyttelton*, II. 653.

upon the financial and foreign policy of the ministry give much hope of success. Finance is peculiarly the province of the specialist, and men will always tend to vote with the party, they usually support, on questions which they cannot understand. Moreover, the foreign policy of the government, save to those who, like Pitt, saw in France the never ceasing enemy of England, and in Prussia our natural ally, was not so glaringly incompetent as to be profoundly unpopular. England might have declined from the proud position she occupied during the seven years' war, and her relations with Prussia might be lacking in harmony: but she was at least not involved in a continental struggle, and was given time to recover from the exhaustion produced by her recent exertions. The country was by no means prepared to enter upon another contest with France; and it was felt that, if the glory of England was due to the enterprise and energy of Pitt, her salvation was owing to the restraint and economy of Grenville¹.

The opposition programme had thus several obvious defects, and was not likely to inspire those, who had undertaken to carry it out, with the hope of success. Men, who had lately been so full of joy, now began to talk in a tone of despair. It was not only Charles Townshend who began to weary of dwelling in a political wilderness; even the Dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire thought of an union with the Duke of Bedford and his party². It was of little use that the whigs should meet at the club, which they had founded, and drink toasts to the success of the party; for not by such means would the ministers be driven from office: "a huzza at Wildman's once a week," as Newcastle truly remarked,

¹ Hist. MSS. Comm. 12th Report, Appendix, ix. p. 340.

² Add. MS. 32960, f. 235.

“will not do alone, though a very good thing¹.” But the real evil was not an imperfect programme but the lack of union. In September, 1764, Lord Barrington described the minority as having “neither abilities nor union²,” and, though ability may not have been lacking, union certainly was. The old evil had reappeared again; and the root of the evil was Pitt. Upon him the whigs had built their hopes. They had confessed that they could do nothing without him. They had failed in their opposition to the Peace of Paris largely because Pitt had refused to cooperate with them: and, for the same reason, they had not succeeded in protecting Wilkes against the animosity of the ministers, or in safeguarding the parliamentary privilege of freedom from arrest. Then had come the happy moment when Pitt threw in his lot with them in the attack on general warrants, and had seemingly become reconciled to Charles Yorke. He had gone still further, and had declared with emphasis that the differences of opinion, which had so weakened the opposition in the past, must not be allowed to render it impotent in the future³. He pressed for the attack to continue, and seemed anxious to welcome as colleagues those whom he had formerly repulsed. Yet, in a few months, almost in a few weeks, he had completely changed. He now talked in a despairing and desponding fashion, declared against opposition, and announced his intention of rarely attending parliament during the next session. He stated that he would never force himself upon the king, but, if his services were desired, he would be ready to take office. He displayed a violent dislike of Charles Yorke and Charles Townshend, though, apparently,

¹ Add. MS. 32960, f. 332.

² Hist. MSS. Comm. Lothian MSS. p. 252.

³ Add. MS. 32956, f. 83, f. 103.

amicably disposed towards the other whig leaders, and, as he expressly said, would only come into employment "supported by all the great families which have ever distinguished themselves in the cause of liberty and the Revolution¹."

Pitt had not, therefore, yet broken with the whigs, and Newcastle still believed that he would never take office without them². But he was no longer willing to unite with them in opposition; and, as so often before, they were to be left to fight their battles alone, while the one man, with whose assistance they could not dispense, either absented himself from parliament or followed an independent and often opposite line of policy. It soon became known that Pitt was not likely to oppose the government³; and the news must have been welcome to the king and his ministers. Pitt withdrew from the contest at the time when he was most needed, and by his action deprived the opposition of that element of strength which might have enabled it to prevail against the growing power of the crown. For the subsequent misfortunes, which befell the country, he cannot escape his share of responsibility; and the triumph of the king was due in a measure to the course he adopted.

It is by no means easy to discuss the motives which inspired his conduct. He had certain grievances, but they were hardly of sufficient importance to justify his withdrawal from the opposition at the critical moment of its career. He apparently objected to the cessation of hostilities which had marked the close of the last session, and

¹ Add. MS. 32961, f. 186; see also Add. MS. 32959, f. 42, f. 306; Add. MS. 32960, f. 17; Add. MS. 32961, f. 186, f. 308; Add. MS. 32962, f. 48.

² Add. MS. 32961, f. 291.

³ Hist. MSS. Comm. Lothian MSS. p. 252.

which was partly due to the Cambridge contest¹; but he laid greater stress upon the fact that, when Grenville had introduced his budget, adverse comments had been made upon the English military operations in Germany during the seven years' war, and not a member of the opposition had taken up the challenge². He was to repeat this complaint at a later date; and the reiteration may be taken as evidence that the grievance was deep-seated and not a mere trivial excuse thrown off to justify an action inspired by other motives. There can be no doubt that he was unduly suspicious of the good faith of the whigs, especially in regard to questions in any way connected with foreign policy; and the omission on the part of the opposition to defend the German war from the aspersions cast upon it by Grenville, would be sufficient to arouse his latent distrust of Newcastle and his followers, and revive his dislike of the party system. Again and again he had declared that he would not take the closet by storm, and that he wished to concern himself with measures not with men. In moments of excitement, such as during the attack upon general warrants, he seemed willing to belie his words, and to embark upon a regular course of opposition to the administration; but, when the crisis had passed, he reverted to his original opinions, and shunned what he thought to be the factious scheming of Newcastle and his associates. Though he was ready to choose his colleagues from amongst the whig party, if called upon by the king to form an administration, he was not prepared to place himself at the head of a faction pledged to thwart and hinder the ministry.

The irreparable breach had not yet come, and all that was known was that Pitt no longer took part in the

¹ Add. MS. 32958, f. 226.

² Add. MS. 32960, f. 17.

counsels of the opposition, and was unlikely to oppose the government when parliament met again. Nor was this the only disappointment which befell the whig party. It soon became known that both Charles Yorke and Charles Townshend were uncertain in their allegiance. The former was in a far from enviable position. His brief reconciliation with Pitt had come to an abrupt end¹, for he had given the latter new cause for offence by his patronage of Dr Hay who had unfortunately distinguished himself, during the last parliamentary session, by making a violent attack upon the common council of the city of London: "a nest of hornets," as Walpole sagaciously remarked, "that I do not see the prudence of attacking²." As it was in the city that Pitt numbered his warmest supporters, he was bitterly offended with Hay for assaulting the stronghold of his influence, but he was probably angrier with Yorke for espousing the cause of such a man³. Newcastle was also chagrined by the behaviour of the son of his old friend; and Yorke found that he had little to expect from those for whom he had sacrificed his place in the administration. He had already refused to pledge himself to take an active part in opposing the government⁴; and it seemed likely that he would seize the first opportunity, that offered itself, to establish friendly relations with Grenville, and enter once more into the service of the king. Nor was Charles Townshend more certain in his adherence. Before parliament had risen, he had made overtures to Grenville⁵, and a contemporary described him, aptly enough, as playing the part of harlequin⁶. Ambitious in his own fashion, volatile, un-

¹ Add. MS. 32961, f. 291, f. 308.

² Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 31—34.

³ Add. MS. 32962, f. 48.

⁴ Add. MS. 32958, f. 307.

⁵ *Grenville Papers*, II. 501.

⁶ Hist. MSS. Comm. 12th Report, Appendix, ix. p. 340.

certain, and scantily provided with political convictions he was the least likely of all men to continue a member of a decaying minority. He needed the stimulus of success to spur him to laborious endeavour; and, in the days of their misfortune, the whigs were not likely to number him in their ranks¹.

The outlook was black enough, but it was to grow darker still. The Duke of Cumberland, the constant adviser of the opposition, was in favour of disregarding Pitt altogether. It was known that the Duke of Bedford was on bad terms with his fellow ministers, and had ceased to be a regular attendant at cabinet councils: and Cumberland suggested that the whigs should throw over the man who had proved himself so intractable, and conclude an alliance with the Duke of Bedford and his party. Such a step was too bold for the prudent statesmanship of Newcastle who feared that Pitt might take his revenge for such treatment by forming an alliance with Bute². Perilous as was the situation of the opposition, and valuable as the assistance would be that Bedford could give, Newcastle still clung to the belief that, when the battle was begun again, Pitt would be found fighting foremost in the field. He refused to be persuaded by Cumberland, and in September, 1764, declared himself to "be as eager, as ever I was, to get Mr Pitt to take an active part at the head of us³." He was to be undeceived, and by Pitt himself, who in October, 1764, definitely broke with the whig party. Newcastle had learnt that the parliamentary representatives in the counties of Cornwall and Devonshire were willing

¹ Townshend was also offended because his pamphlet "A Defence of the Minority," was but coldly received by the party whom it was written to justify. Add. MS. 32962, f. 129.

² Add. MS. 32960, f. 349, f. 361.

³ Add. MS. 32962, f. 48.

to support the opposition party if it would undertake to press for the removal of the cyder tax¹; and though this scheme was but coldly received by the whig leaders², it was submitted to Pitt for his opinion. The latter seized the opportunity to declare his independence of the opposition. He refused to give his views upon the plan submitted to him by Newcastle, and described himself as standing single, attached to no party, and determined to act "under the obligation of principles, not by the force of any particular bargains." He again referred to the action of the opposition in allowing the attacks upon the German war to pass unchallenged, and pointedly remarked that, after such treatment, he had little mind to begin "the world again upon a new centre of union³." It was the letter of an angry and a disappointed man, determined to associate no longer with those whom he thought had treated him badly; and his description of himself as "a man standing single, and daring to appeal to his country at large upon the soundness of his principles and the rectitude of his conduct⁴" was hardly needed to inform the whigs that they could no longer look to him as a leader or even as an ally. The break was complete, and Pitt had definitely repudiated the opposition. It was clear that his advice could no longer be taken, nor his assistance expected. The indispensable man had once more declared himself a free lance; and the whigs were obliged to pursue their way without him, trusting that their policy would be such as he would approve, and occasionally support⁵. But at the best it

¹ Add. MS. 32962, f. 329.

² Add. MS. 32963, f. 19, f. 50.

³ *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 296.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Add. MS. 32962, f. 30, f. 366; Add. MS. 32963, f. 50, f. 122, f. 243, f. 364, f. 375; Add. MS. 32964, f. 109. The Duke of Cumberland was in favour of the opposition definitely repudiating Pitt, and, that this was not done, was partly due to Newcastle's influence.

was but a sorry prospect, for the loss of Pitt was not the only blow which the opposition had suffered. Charles Townshend was treating with Grenville for the succession to the remunerative office of paymaster general¹, and Charles Yorke had once more enlisted under the king, taking no office, but being gratified by a patent of precedence which gave him rank between the attorney and solicitor general². It is not surprising that, confronted with these defections, Cumberland began to despair of continuing the contest, and that even Newcastle lost all hope of success. The whig cause seemed doomed, and if the ministers were called upon to face an opposition when parliament met, this was due, not to the leaders of the party, but to a few energetic spirits who refused to abandon hope, and determined to fight the battle to the end. Both Cumberland and Newcastle were inclined to abandon the struggle against overwhelming odds³; and the ministers had little cause to fear the attacks of the remnant who refused either to surrender or retreat.

Thus the parliamentary session, which began on January 10th, 1765, promised to be tame and uneventful. As a matter of fact, the unexpected was to happen, and Grenville was to fall from power at the time when he seemed to have least to fear from his enemies. Too great a stress should not be laid upon the lack of union and cordiality in the cabinet, for that was no new feature; and, though often divided in opinion⁴, the ministers were always ready to unite against a common enemy. Their weakness was that they were only maintained in power

¹ *Grenville Papers*, II. 465, 466.

² Add. MS. 35428, f. 1; Add. MS. 32963, f. 405; Add. MS. 32964, f. 5, f. 287; *Grenville Papers*, II. 467—473, 523—532.

³ Add. MS. 32963, f. 364, f. 391; Add. MS. 32964, f. 93, f. 109.

⁴ *Grenville Papers*, II. 502, 504, 510—515; Hist. MSS. Comm. Stopford Sackville MSS. I. 61, 97.

by the will of the king. He had supported them against the attacks of the opposition, and in spite of their unpopularity with the country; and they had served his purpose, for through them he had avenged himself upon Wilkes. It would seem that they had now fulfilled their mission. The king had endured and made use of Grenville, but he had never liked him, and would not hesitate to overthrow him if a suitable successor could be found. Before Grenville had been in office many weeks, the king had attempted to replace him by Pitt. The attempt had failed; and for eighteen months Grenville had continued in power because the king feared to surrender himself to the mercy of the whig party and the great commoner. The political situation, however, had now changed. The king had nothing to dread from a weakened and discredited opposition; and was, therefore, willing to take into his service those who had learnt the folly of struggling against the power of the crown. Grenville, now that he no longer stood between the court and disaster, discovered that the royal support was not given so freely as in the past, and that, whereas the king had formerly been friendly and cordial, he was now cold and embarrassed. Moreover, many of those, who passed by the name of Lord Bute's friends, often abstained from speaking or voting when the ministry was attacked. Sometimes, active opposition took the place of indifference, and, early in the session, the prime minister complained to the king of the difficulties under which he was obliged to carry on the government¹. Walpole, an acute though prejudiced politician, prophesied that the session would see the close of Grenville's reign².

Thus the ministry was endangered by the court and

¹ *Grenville Papers*, III. 112, 114—116; *Walpole's Letters*, VI. 172—176.

² *Walpole's Letters*, VI. 176—181.

not by the opposition which had reached the lowest ebb of its fortunes. It is probable that the Duke of Cumberland abandoned, for the time being, his rôle of confidential adviser to the whig party, and Newcastle, in despair at the course events were taking, attended the house of lords as little as possible¹. Those, that were left to continue the battle, fought valiantly, but their efforts only served to display their weakness. In accordance with the programme, which had been agreed upon many months before, Sir William Meredith moved in the house of commons that the use of general warrants in cases of libel was illegal; but the debate, though protracted, was of no service to the opposition. Pitt was not present, though the motion had been postponed in order that he might be able to attend; and Charles Yorke, departing from his bold attitude of the previous year, spoke with so much caution and reserve that his speech was of little value except to the government. Desertion and disaster had thinned the ranks of the party which had once come so near to victory on this very question; and an amendment, which destroyed the original motion, was carried by a majority of thirty-nine votes. "To be beaten on such a question," wrote George Onslow who had been present at the debate, "is too serious—I am sick and tired and shocked²."

If the opposition had failed to gain credit by attacking general warrants, it was not likely that it would be more successful in any other venture. Those, who had led and directed the attacks upon the ministry in former

¹ Add. MS. 32966, f. 82.

² Add. MS. 32965, f. 318. See also Add. MS. 32965, f. 311, f. 313, f. 314, f. 316, f. 320; Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 37 seq.; Walpole's *Letters*, VI. 185—187; *Grenville Papers*, III. 4—6; Hist. MSS. Comm. Weston Underwood MSS. p. 382; *Parliamentary History*, XVI.

sessions, had either joined the enemy or withdrawn from the contest; and, like sheep without a shepherd, the remnant of a once respectable party was left undirected and unadvised¹. Opportunities were missed because they were not seen; and Grenville, trusting in his predominance in parliament, was able to sow the seed which produced the revolt of the American colonies. He had already given notice in the previous year that he intended to raise a revenue in America; and when on February 6th he introduced the stamp bill in the house of commons, it was in accordance with a carefully thought out policy². He knew that several of the American assemblies had passed resolutions against the right of the English parliament to levy an internal tax upon the colonies, and it was with the deliberate purpose of establishing that right that Grenville brought forward his measure³. Ignorance of American feeling cannot, therefore, be pleaded in his

¹ "I find it is thought...that the bill which Mr Townshend opposed, might have been thrown out if it had been better managed. But there is no care taken in either house to apprize our friends of what is to come on, or what is desired of them....I am sorry to tell you that your opposition is in very low esteem here at Bath," Newcastle to Onslow. Add. MS. 32966, f. 79.

² It is important to note, however, that Grenville cannot claim the honour or dishonour of having originated the idea of imposing stamp duties upon the American colonists. In a pamphlet, written by Henry M'Culloh, an experienced colonial official, and submitted to Lord Bute in 1761, great stress was laid upon the necessity of establishing "proper funds in America, by a stamp duty on vellum and paper." There is ample evidence to show that M'Culloh's suggestion was very carefully considered by the ministers. Among the Hardwicke papers is a document, dated October 10th, 1763, containing a list of the articles to be included in a stamp act, and endorsed "10th October, 1763, was presented to Mr Grenville (*sic*), who approved it." See *Our Concerns in America* by Henry M'Culloh; with an introduction by William A. Shaw. See also *Grenville Papers*, II. 373, n. 1.

³ Hist. MSS. Comm. Weston Underwood MSS. p. 382.

favour, nor would he have been inclined to shelter himself behind that excuse. He stood his stand upon what he thought to be sound law, and in the name of a principle defied the resistance of a nation. But he does not stand alone in his guilt, for in the debate on February 6th he found himself supported by Charles Townshend and many of the opposition. Barré was almost the only one who raised his voice in protest, and the ministry had a triumphant majority of nigh upon two hundred¹. Pitt, alone, could have stayed Grenville's triumphant course, and constructed a formidable party out of what was now but the wreck of an opposition. But he refused to come out of the retirement to which he had condemned himself. In earlier days he had often attended the house, wrapped in flannel and supported on crutches; but the energy and spirit on behalf of liberty, which had formerly raised him from the bed of sickness, no longer animated him. He despaired of the opposition, and disapproved its tactics. Though no one had been more violent in denouncing general warrants, he now objected to the revival of that question²; and though no one had excelled him as a champion of parliamentary privilege when it had been violated in the person of Wilkes, he now appeared unwilling to take an active part in attacking the ministry for dismissing Conway from his military command³. To Grenville's proposal to tax America he took objection, and was aggrieved because that measure had met with such scanty resistance⁴. Lord Rockingham, who visited him

¹ Add. MS. 32965, f. 346; Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 56; Walpole's *Letters*, VI. 187—191; *Parliamentary History*, XVI.

² Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 48.

³ Add. MS. 32966, f. 39; Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 48.

⁴ "I saw my Lord Rockingham this morning, whose account of Mr Pitt I think so disagreeable a one that...I shall not be much displeased if he stays away on the military question...I find he still harps upon the

about this time, came to the conclusion that Pitt would never more unite with the whig party in opposition¹. He preferred to live in seclusion, waiting until he was summoned by the king to take office². There was nothing mean or ignoble in such an attitude; but it was fraught with disastrous consequences for the whig party and, indeed, for England.

While Pitt had been living in retirement, and Grenville had been pursuing his triumphant and disastrous course in parliament, the king had suffered the first attack of that insanity which was to recur in a more aggravated form in later years. On his recovery, he instructed his ministers to prepare a regency bill which should provide for the event of a minor succeeding to the throne. The regency act of the previous reign was to be taken as a model, except that no restriction was to be placed on the king's right of nominating the regent. This important reservation of power to the crown was open to serious objections, and was not approved by the ministers; but they agreed at a cabinet meeting that the bill should give the king the right of nominating as regent "the queen or any other person of the royal family usually residing in Great Britain"; and George III acquiesced in this immaterial limitation of his original proposal³. Grenville and his colleagues had thus complied with the royal wishes, but it was against their own convictions; and the prime minister had warned the king of the difficulties that might ensue⁴. The latter remained

nonsense and falsehood of his being given up on the subject of the German war last year, and is not without his complaints of the American tax being not sufficiently objected to this year." Onslow to Newcastle, March 19th, 1765. Add. MS. 32966, f. 69.

¹ Add. MS. 32966, f. 69.

² *Ibid.* and Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 323, 324.

³ *Grenville Papers*, III. 15, 16, 125. ⁴ *Grenville Papers*, III. 127, 128.

unshaken in his determination. It was not likely that he would be touched by the remonstrances of his servants, for he had already decided to cut short their tenure of power. He intended to rid himself of advisers whom he had already endured too long for his happiness and peace of mind; and this resolution existed before the ministers had given the king legitimate cause of offence by their conduct over the regency bill. During the second week of April, the Earl of Northumberland, acting as the representative of the crown, informed the Duke of Cumberland that the king was weary of his ministers, and desired to change them directly the regency bill had been passed by parliament. Cumberland wisely refused to begin a negotiation while the fate of an important measure was still in suspense, nor would he be encouraged to undertake the arduous task of forming an administration by learning that Bute must be given a cabinet office¹. Northumberland's mission was productive of no result, but it has an interest inasmuch as it shows that the king was anxious to rid himself of Grenville, and was willing to extend a friendly hand to the whig party in the hour of its defeat.

But he was prepared to wait a little longer, and had resolved that, before the Grenville ministry was dismissed, the regency bill should have been converted into a statute. The story of the passage of that bill through the two houses of parliament has often been told. When the measure was introduced into the house of lords, debate centred round the clause under which the king was to have the right of nominating as regent any member of the royal family, and attention called to the fact that

¹ Add. MS. 32966, f. 275. See also *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 185—190. Newcastle's *Narrative of the changes in the ministry 1765—1767* (edited by Miss Mary Bateson), pp. 1—7.

the royal family had never been subjected to legal definition, which, though a point of little importance in itself, was invested with considerable interest for the politicians of the period. If the Princess of Wales was to be regarded as a member of the royal family, she might become regent on the death of her son, and serve as a cloak for the power of Bute. The doubt once raised, it was necessary to settle it; and it was with the royal permission that Lord Halifax proposed and carried an amendment by which the regency was limited to the queen and those descendants of the late king, usually resident in England. Thus the bill, as passed by the upper house, excluded the Princess of Wales from the regency.

Men were naturally astonished that the king should have allowed a slight to be put on his mother, with whom he had always lived on friendly and affectionate terms. His conduct has been variously explained: and while some, attributing to him a machiavellian cunning, think that he was ready to allow the princess to be insulted in order that he might have a legitimate grievance against his ministers, others incline to believe that he gave his consent to Halifax's amendment without fully understanding its meaning. It is by no means improbable that he acted under the influence of fear. He had good cause to know how unpopular his mother and Lord Bute were; and might with justice dread to furnish an excuse for a further outcry against them. He naturally shrank from making the princess a subject of parliamentary debate; and, intimidated perhaps by the gloomy forebodings of his ministers, decided to impose an indignity upon her, rather than allow an insult to be inflicted by others. But he had no sooner taken the step than he repented of it. He had branded his mother as unfit for

the discharge of a responsible duty, and proclaimed himself to the world as lacking in filial respect; but, fortunately, the mistake was not irretrievable. What had been settled by the house of lords, could be altered by the house of commons, and the king appealed to Grenville to arrange for the insertion of the princess' name in the bill during its passage through the lower house. Grenville was not inclined to obey. He had no wish to help in the establishment of Bute's power, nor was he prepared to inform the world that Lord Halifax had either misunderstood or deceived his master. Rebuffed by his prime minister, the king turned for help to Lord Northampton who, willing to act against his colleagues with whom he was in disagreement, arranged that a member of the house of commons, known to be in the confidence of the Princess of Wales, should propose the insertion of her name in the bill. The motion was carried without a division, and, on the final reading of the bill in the lower house, only thirty-seven members voted against the princess being qualified to become regent.

The task, for which Grenville had been retained in power, was thus accomplished, and no sooner had the regency bill been passed by the house of commons, than the king set to work to bring about a change of ministry. No one could be surprised that he was anxious to rid himself of those who had induced him to inflict an insult upon his mother; and, as any opposition worthy of the name had ceased to exist, it was impossible to contend that he had been driven to dismiss his ministers at the command of parliament or the nation. Grenville and his colleagues fell in the hey-day of their parliamentary power, and their destruction was due to the king. No better time could have been chosen. The whigs were

disheartened, divided, and ineffective. Without a definite political programme, living politically from hand to mouth, they would, if called upon to take office, owe their return to power to their failure and not to their success. Pitt's position was but little better. Drawing himself apart from those who had been, and were still, willing to accept him as a leader, he had absented himself for many weeks from parliament, and lived in gloomy retirement at Hayes. He had definitely abandoned opposition; and it was as true of him, as it was of the whigs, that only by the king could he be restored to office.

Thus George III had little cause to be afraid of those who at one time threatened to take the cabinet by storm. Probably aware that Pitt was no longer on intimate terms with Newcastle and his followers, he was prepared to form an administration in which Pitt and the whig party were both represented. Acting again on behalf of the crown, Lord Northumberland visited Cumberland on May 13th, and informed him that the king desired to form a ministry to include Pitt, Lord Temple, and the great whig families. Only a few persons were named for office, among whom, however, was Northumberland himself, who was to be at the head of the treasury. Cumberland was willing enough, now that the fate of the regency bill had been settled, to undertake the task thus imposed upon him. He would be naturally anxious that his whig friends should be once more restored to power; and, though having little sympathy with Pitt, he probably perceived the necessity of including him in the ministry. For a week he was endeavouring to carry the king's wishes to a successful conclusion. No difficulty was experienced with the whigs, and, if it had rested with them alone, an administration would have been quickly formed. But they feared to act without Pitt; and, unless the

latter could be won, Cumberland was doomed to labour in vain. It was here that the difficulty came. Pitt and his brother-in-law, Temple, remained deaf to all arguments and persuasion. They refused to come into the service of the crown, and Cumberland was obliged to confess to failure: the king was once more frustrated in the attempt to rid himself of the ministers of whom he had long been weary.

Thus another opportunity of giving the country a stable government was lost, and the culprit on this occasion was Pitt. His conduct is not easy of explanation. Both he and Temple stipulated as conditions of their taking office that those officers in the army, who had been dismissed from their posts because of the way they had voted in parliament, should be restored, that steps should be taken to declare the illegality of general warrants, and that alliances should be made with Russia and Prussia in order to check the power of France and Spain on the continent. Comprehensive as these demands were, they were not refused by Cumberland. The first two were fully accepted, and, if the king did not bind himself to a change in foreign policy, he agreed to it if Pitt, after taking office, continued to think it desirable¹. Newcastle believed that these demands were not responsible for the failure of the negotiation, and it is not likely that Cumberland would have journeyed to Hayes unless he had gained the royal consent to conditions, the fulfilment of which Pitt had already declared to be essential to his acceptance of office. It has also been suggested that both Pitt and Temple were influenced by fear of Bute. The negotiations with Cumberland had been first opened by Northumberland whose son had married a daughter of

¹ Grafton's *Autobiography*, p. 45; Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 14. For an opposite view, see *Grenville Papers*, III. 226.

the great Scotch earl; and Northumberland had originally been named for the office of first lord of the treasury. No administration, which included Northumberland in an important office, could be counted as safe from Bute's influence, and if Pitt and Temple feared this danger, they had ample excuse. Yet everything was done to allay the alarm which had thus been aroused. The idea of giving the treasury to Northumberland was at once abandoned when it was found to encounter opposition; and Cumberland undertook that neither Bute nor his brother Mackenzie should be allowed to interfere in the affairs of Scotland. He also promised, as a pledge of the sincerity of the king's intentions, that a certain number of those, who were known to be attached to Bute and to regard him as their leader, should be removed from their posts. More could hardly have been done to reassure Pitt and Temple on this delicate point, and if they still continued to feel alarm, this must be ascribed to prejudice rather than to reason. It is probable that Temple was the more violent of the two. Pitt had always objected to the furious attack to which Bute had been subjected, but Temple was a politician only too likely to be swayed by blind passion and personal animosity. His influence over Pitt may have possibly induced the latter to disbelieve Cumberland's assurances, and it is clear that from the outset Temple was opposed to giving serious consideration to the royal proposals, and was surprised to find his brother-in-law so willing to take office¹. Yet, however much weight one may attach to the influence that Temple was able to exercise, it is impossible to believe that Pitt blindly followed him against his own convictions. It is also equally

¹ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 194, 195; *Grafton's Autobiography*, p. 45; Add. MS. 32966, f. 420.

difficult to believe that Pitt was obsessed by a fear of Bute; and it is necessary to account for his refusal by some more sufficient reason.

The key to the puzzle may possibly be found to lie in the relations between Pitt and the whig party. He had definitely repudiated the party system which had become an essential feature of the whig creed, and had withdrawn into retirement rather than continue to fight as an ally of those who practised and advocated a principle of which he heartily disapproved. Refusing absolutely to advise them or share in their counsels, he stood apart, solitary and independent. In these circumstances he might well feel disinclined to take office in an administration which was to be formed in accordance with Cumberland's advice¹. It is clear that the negotiation had been conducted in a manner of which he could not approve. Instead of appealing directly to him, the king had turned to Cumberland who naturally consulted with his whig friends. Newcastle, Rockingham, and their followers had been actively engaged in discussing arrangements before Pitt had ever been approached, and the latter could not but feel that, though included in the negotiation, he had not been called upon to play the leading part. A negotiation conducted in such a manner would be likely to result in the construction of a whig administration; and in such Pitt did not desire either to lead or to serve. It mattered little to him that the proposal to place Northumberland at the head of the treasury should be dropped, if that office was to be given to Rockingham or some other member of Newcastle's following. Pitt would not be satisfied unless that post was held by Lord Temple, an ally of his own, and not a follower of Newcastle². When

¹ Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 10.

² Apparently Cumberland intended to make Pitt understand that

all was over, and Cumberland had abandoned his task, Pitt informed a friend that he had never been offered *carte blanche*, and that it had never been intended that it should be his administration¹. He meant probably that it was to be a whig ministry, and not one of his making; and, what is more significant still, he hinted to his friend, James Grenville, "an impossibility of ever being with the Duke of Newcastle and his immediate friends²." It would seem, therefore, reasonable to believe that Pitt did not object to any particular details, but to the principle upon which the negotiation was conducted. He had definitely broken with the whigs when in opposition, and was not willing to unite with them in an administration³. The bitter personal animosity, which he afterwards felt against Newcastle, does not appear to have been in existence; and he was willing enough to enlist individual whigs under his banner⁴, provided that they foreswore allegiance to the party to which they belonged. It was of the nature of a tragedy that this fundamental difference of opinion separated Pitt from those who could not stand without him. He may have been right in thinking that he could save the country, but he was wrong in believing that he could dispense with the support of the whig party. An opportunity was to be given him to put his principles into practice; and he encountered disaster and failure. Limited in outlook as Newcastle often was, his political insight, clearer than that of Pitt, enabled him to see that a ministry, lacking any common bond of

Lord Temple was to have the treasury, but did not succeed in doing so. Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 19.

¹ Grafton's *Autobiography*, p. 51.

² Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 79, 80.

³ Von Ruville's *William Pitt, Graf von Chatham*, III. 160 ff.

⁴ Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 51, 52.

union, lay at the mercy of the king, and was certain to meet with an untimely fate whenever it presumed to thwart the wishes of the crown¹.

The negotiation having failed, the king was left in an unenviable position. He had not been able to gain the assistance either of Pitt or the whigs; and it was not likely that help could be obtained from any other quarter. Lord Lyttelton was asked to step into the breach, but he wisely refused to undertake a task which would have almost certainly proved beyond his capacity². Cumberland made a final attempt to win Pitt, and Lord Temple was sent with a message to Hayes; but, like another famous ruler, the king did not wait for an answer³, and, abandoning all hope, threw himself upon the mercy of Grenville. It was the second time that he had failed to rid himself of that minister, and again Grenville enjoyed his hour of triumph. It was for him and his colleagues to state the conditions upon which they would consent to remain in the service of the crown. They knew that they no longer possessed the confidence of the king who had vainly endeavoured to find others to take their place; and, smarting under the affront which had been put upon them, they determined to make the fullest use of their victory. They abused the advantage they possessed. They scouted the idea of magnanimity, and, by the conditions which they imposed, rendered themselves more hateful to the crown than ever. If they could not be blamed for demanding that Bute's influence should cease, they certainly committed a grave blunder in forcing the king to

¹ For a general account of this negotiation, see Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 40—52; *Grenville Papers*, III. 37—40, 170—173, 225, 226; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 191—203; *Newcastle's Narrative*, pp. 3—15.

² *Grenville Papers*, III. 227; Grafton's *Autobiography*, p. 47.

³ *Newcastle's Narrative*, pp. 19, 20; *Hist. MSS. Comm.* 12th Report, Appendix, IX. p. 255; Phillimore's *Lyttelton*, II. 676.

dismiss Mackenzie from the office of privy seal of Scotland. The latter had been promised security of tenure, and the king was compelled to break his word at the dictation of his ministers. He complied with the demand, but the breach between him and his servants was widened in consequence; for he was not the man to forgive anyone for compelling him to act in a manner unworthy of his honour. Another victim of the ministerial hatred was Henry Fox, now Lord Holland, who was deprived of his office of paymaster general. Few outside his own domestic circle could have regretted his fall. Men had not yet forgiven him for his conduct during the time that he had managed the house of commons; and he found few supporters in the hour of his adversity. He had sacrificed his ambition and his principles for the sake of money; and was deservedly distrusted and despised, even by those who had made use of him. He had clung to the office of paymaster for the sake of the wealth that it brought; and it is not likely that the king was unwilling to deprive him of it. His place was taken by Charles Townshend who had long been angling for the remunerative post, and, by accepting it, finally broke with the opposition¹.

It is hardly conceivable that the king regarded this settlement as permanent. He had become the slave of his own servants, and had been forced to consent to conditions which would have been rightly considered as humiliating by the meanest of his subjects. His grandfather, whom he had been taught to regard as far too subservient to his ministers, had never been subjected to such tyranny; and if he felt compelled to give way for a season, it was only that he might gain time to prepare to

¹ *Grenville Papers*, III. 38, 40, 41, 176—190; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 278—281; Add. MS. 34713, f. 239.

strike another blow. Grenville and his colleagues had been guilty of a fatal mistake. Instead of propitiating the king, and trying to win his confidence by kindness, they had so wantonly insulted and humiliated him that no possible evil in the future could be worse than the degradation which he had already endured. He had, therefore, every excuse for attempting to undo what had been done: and if the ministers believed that he was willing to submit to the defeat which he had suffered and cease to intrigue against them, they showed themselves strangely ignorant of the limits of human and royal endurance. The outlook for the king was dark, but it was certainly not hopeless. He had gained some advantage by his recent negotiation, for he was now on friendly terms with his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, and the whig party¹. The past, if not forgotten, had at least been forgiven; and the king knew that the whigs were willing to take office if the assistance of Pitt could be secured. Thus everything depended upon the latter. If he would consent to form a ministry, Grenville could be dismissed, and the king rescued from a state bordering on subjection. "The Duke's place, I think," wrote Newcastle, "is to behave so to Mr Pitt that before the next session he may come in cordially, and accept that what he has now refused²."

Barely more than a fortnight after these words were written, another negotiation with Pitt had been begun. The king had not scrupled to show his dislike of his

¹ Cumberland informed Newcastle that he "had received a very kind message from the king; and I believe it is intended on both sides to keep up the present intimacy and confidence between them; if so, and that our friends are thoroughly and cordially united amongst themselves, all will do well." Newcastle to Rockingham, June 1st, 1765. Add. MS. 32967, f. 3.

² Add. MS. 32967, f. 3.

ministers, and had been lectured by the Duke of Bedford "for not giving his confidence to those in whom he had vested his authority." The president of the council had spoken with emphasis, and had assured the king that if he found himself unable to confide in his servants, it became him to find others to succeed them¹. Knowing that he certainly could not confide in his ministers, and ready to interpret Bedford's words in their widest sense, the king was not slow to act upon the hint which had thus been inadvertently given²; and a few days after this conversation, he was planning with the Duke of Cumberland a negotiation with Pitt³. This was to undertake an enterprise of no little daring; and whichever way events turned, retreat would be impossible. If Pitt continued obstinate, or if for any other cause the negotiation failed, the king could not fall back upon the assistance of Grenville. Twice he had publicly attempted to rid himself of that minister, and he could not afford to confess to failure a third time. If Pitt refused to come into office, the king would be compelled to construct a cabinet without him. The fall of the Grenville ministry was certain: all that remained in doubt was the character of the administration which would succeed it.

The negotiation, which had been carried on in the previous May, had been opened by an offer to the whigs who had been treated with independently of Pitt. This time a different method was adopted. Instead of appealing to the whigs, whom he knew to be ready to come to his assistance, the king agreed to ask Pitt to come and see him. Newcastle and his friends were thus excluded from the negotiation, and their chance of obtaining office would

¹ *Grenville Papers*, III. 194; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 286—288.

² *Grenville Papers*, III. 211—216.

³ Add. MS. 32967, f. 48; *Newcastle's Narrative*, p. 22.

depend upon the goodwill of Pitt. The latter could no longer complain that he was asked to preside in a cabinet which was not of his own making; and, therefore, the grievance, which may have prevented him from accepting the previous offer, no longer existed. It is difficult to say whether this innovation was due to the king or the Duke of Cumberland¹; but whoever was responsible could claim the credit of a successful move. Pitt visited the king twice, and on both occasions George III showed himself compliant and anxious to come to terms². He agreed that general warrants should be condemned, that Pratt should be made lord chancellor, that officers in the army, who had been dismissed for votes given in parliament, should be restored and that an alliance should be formed with Russia and Prussia if it were found to be practicable³. After the second meeting, which took place on Saturday, June 22nd, it was generally understood that Pitt had consented to take office⁴.

Up to this point the king had met with a success greater, perhaps, than he had anticipated. Pitt had shown himself willing to accept office, and had only asked for what the king had found himself able to grant. But Newcastle was by no means so happy at the course of the negotiation. He had not been consulted by Pitt, and depended for this information upon the Duke of Cumberland and Lord Albemarle who was in Cumberland's confidence. It must have been clear to the meanest intelligence that, though individual whigs might be given

¹ Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 22; Add. MS. 32967, f. 48; *Grenville Papers*, III. 52—54, 202; Harris' *Hardwicke*, III. 445 ff.

² The king was apparently more ready to comply with Pitt's demands at the second meeting than at the first. *Grenville Papers*, III. 60, 61.

³ Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 53, 83—86; *Grenville Papers*, III. 60, 61; Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 23.

⁴ Add. MS. 32967, f. 103.

office, the administration was not to be representative of the whig party. Newcastle knew that if he chose he could be lord president of the council¹; but it would be little comfort to him, much as he might wish for power, to sit in a cabinet which he had not assisted to construct. He did not disguise his chagrin from his friends, and informed Lord Ashburnham that, if Pitt formed an administration, it would be in a way "not agreeable to us, or to the public, or I should think to himself²." He was probably correct in his surmise as far as it affected himself and his party. Pitt, being given a free hand, was evidently determined to choose his colleagues, not because of their political connections, but on account of their fitness for the work which he intended them to perform; and it may be because he had this freedom of selection that he was willing to take office. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand why he showed himself so obstinate in May, and so compliant in June. On both occasions the king had given his consent to the demands which Pitt made, though in June he probably received fuller assurances of the royal intention to follow the policy which he approved. The difference in this particular can hardly be held to account for the change in his attitude; and it would appear far more probable that it was due to the exclusion of Newcastle from the negotiation. If in May Pitt had been summoned to visit the king, and allowed to nominate his colleagues, Grenville might have fallen from office a month earlier than he actually did.

Yet, when all seemed settled, a change was to come over the scene, which set the king once more adrift without a ministry in which he could confide. Pitt had determined that Temple should be first lord of the treasury; but, greatly to his surprise, the latter refused to take that

¹ Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 23.

² Add. MS. 32967 June 21st, 1765.

office or indeed any other. Argument and persuasion were tried but with no effect. Though Temple knew that Pitt would not take office without him, he remained firm in his resolution, and Pitt was obliged to inform the king that he must decline the task of forming a ministry. The unexpected had happened, and what had been so nearly achieved had to be begun all over again.

Two problems present themselves in connection with this incident. It is not at all clear why Temple refused to come into the service of the crown, and why Pitt declined to form an administration without him. Temple's conduct has been variously explained, and, probably, no completely satisfactory solution will ever be offered. It is likely that he was influenced by more than one motive, and would perhaps have found it difficult himself to state the various causes of his refusal. Of a jealous and intriguing disposition, he was possibly provoked at the predominant part which Pitt had played in the negotiations; and considered himself to be of sufficient importance to have been consulted before everything had been arranged. He was certainly angry at the consideration shown to the followers of Lord Bute¹; and it is not out of the question that he believed the ministry, as Pitt had formed it, to be doomed to failure. He certainly told the king that he was induced to refuse the offer, which had been made, because of the difficulty of forming a proper plan in regard to the house of commons². Pitt did not propose to attend parliament regularly, pleading his health as an excuse³; and Temple might justly feel that, in his leader's absence, the ministry might easily be overcome by a joint attack of the

¹ Phillimore's *Lyttelton*, II. 676; *Grenville Papers*, III. 64.

² *Grenville Papers*, III. 200, 201; *Newcastle's Narrative*, p. 24.

³ Phillimore's *Lyttelton*, II. 676; *Newcastle's Narrative*, p. 24.

members of the whig opposition, who had not been given office, and the supporters of the previous ministry. But Temple did not act from this motive alone: and he was loud in proclaiming that he was influenced by reasons of too delicate a nature to be revealed. He was commonly understood to refer to his recent reconciliation with his brother, George Grenville; but he always denied this interpretation of his words, and asserted that the reconciliation was of a purely private character, and destitute of any political significance¹. Thus the matter stands: the knowledge, which Temple denied to his contemporaries, has not been revealed to posterity; and his action still awaits an explanation.

Interesting as it may be to speculate upon the cause of Temple's refusal, it is of far greater importance to understand its effect upon Pitt. It is not a little surprising to find him definitely abandoning the task of forming a ministry on learning that Temple was determined not to take office. The latter, though an active politician, had not risen to great eminence in the political world and, if it had not been for his wealth, his rank, and his kinship with Pitt, would have been comparatively unknown. In the administration, as it had existed at the beginning of the reign, he had only occupied the unimportant post of lord privy seal; and would have been held in little consideration by his colleagues if he had not been known to be a satellite of his brother-in-law. Thus he was of little weight, and if Pitt deemed his services essential in 1765, it was not on account of his political influence. Nor is it probable that Pitt was moved by considerations of a more sentimental character. Temple had been his friend for many years, and had rendered him financial assistance; but he could hardly be accused of ingratitude if, after

¹ Phillimore's *Lyttelton*, II. 676.

Temple had declined to come into office, he consented to form an administration without him. Nor was Pitt likely to sacrifice everything for a friend however dear. He realised more clearly than many of his contemporaries his duty to his country and his king. He saw, and perhaps exaggerated, the evils of his time, and regarded the rule of Grenville as pregnant with disaster for the state; and if, holding such opinions, he refused to remedy the evils which he saw, and to guard against the dangers which he feared, lest he might be suspected of ingratitude to a relation, he would have been guilty of misplaced chivalry little short of criminal. His action must have been dictated by worthier motives, and if he refused to take office without Temple, it was because he considered his aid to be essential to the success of his schemes. Inconsiderable as he was, Temple was, for the time being, indispensable. He must be given the treasury because there was no one else who could be placed there with safety¹. If that office was filled by Newcastle, the whig party would be given a position of authority in the administration. The Marquis of Rockingham was equally

¹ "My Lord Temple, in his audience of the king, absolutely declined coming into his majesty's service, for private reasons which he could not disclose to anybody; but the publick one he gave was that, in the bad state of Mr Pitt's health, as he (Lord Temple) was not in the house of commons himself, it might frequently happen that Mr Pitt could not be there; that he could not be sure of Mr Pitt's assistance in the house of commons, when perhaps he should be most in need of it; and that he had no other person in the house of commons upon whom he could entirely depend....

"Mr Pitt has been with the king since, and, as I hear, extremely laments and blames my Lord Temple's refusal;...as his ill state of health would frequently prevent him from attending his majesty, he should, if my Lord Temple was not in his majesty's service, not have one person whom he could trust to convey to his majesty his thoughts upon any occasion wherein he might think his majesty's service is concerned." Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 24.

ineligible, for he was closely allied with Newcastle: and the Duke of Grafton, though attached to Pitt who thought highly of his capacity, was an ardent member of the opposition party, and too much in sympathy with the whigs to be suitable. Chance had raised Temple to a position from which he could afford to dictate terms. Pitt was aware that his declining health would no longer allow him to take an active part in business; and if power in the cabinet was not to fall into the hands of the whigs, who would use it to strengthen their position as a party, there must at least be one member of the administration, holding high office, whom he could entirely trust, and who was connected with no political faction but with himself alone. Temple was the only man who could satisfy these conditions; and when he refused to take office, Pitt was obliged to abandon the hope of coming into power. This was the price he was called upon to pay for his determination not to preside over a cabinet representative of the whig party; and he paid it. Willing and even anxious as he was to take office, he preferred to remain in retirement rather than form an administration of which he did not approve. He had staked everything upon the support of Temple, and that had failed him; he had been felled by a blow which he had not expected, and against which he had not guarded.

Once more the king found himself in a dangerous situation, and had good cause to reflect upon the difficulties which beset a constitutional monarch who plays an active part in politics. He had failed to attain the success which had been so nearly in his grasp, and once more found himself embarked upon a stormy sea, uncertain of any harbour of refuge. When he intrigued against Grenville, he had entered upon the conflict unprepared for emergencies, and discovered to his cost that it is easier to

destroy than to create. But he had gone too far to be able to retreat. It was impossible for him, unless he was willing to surrender all power, to ask his present ministers to continue in office; and he had no alternative but to seek assistance from Newcastle and the whigs. He would be saved from suffering further indignities if they consented to serve him, and thus, when all other help had failed, he turned to those whom he had formerly punished and proscribed. It was by no means certain that they would be prepared to come to the rescue of the king. They might be, and apparently were, willing to forget old grievances, for they were anxious to return to power; but they had only recently refused to form a ministry without the assistance of Pitt, and might still adhere to the opinion they had then expressed. Moreover, they still feared the influence which Lord Bute was supposed to exercise over the king; and it was likely that they would demand some material assurances upon this point.

The negotiation with the whigs was conducted by the Duke of Cumberland, and, though carried to a successful conclusion, came once or twice near to failure. A certain number of Newcastle's supporters were strongly opposed to the idea of forming an administration without Pitt, and the Duke of Cumberland, who was inclined to share this view, was only persuaded to persevere in the task, which he had undertaken, by the exhortations of Newcastle¹. It had also been agreed at a meeting of the whig party on June 30th to request the king to remove the more important of Lord Bute's friends from the offices they held, and, also, not to restore Mackenzie to the post of which Grenville had deprived him²; but these demands

¹ Add. MS. 32967, f. 186; *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 218—220; Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 26.

² Pitt had been willing to allow several of Lord Bute's friends to retain

were only partially complied with, and the Duke of Newcastle was aggrieved by the imperfect fulfilment of the conditions which he and his friends had all agreed must be assented to before they could take office¹. But both parties to the negotiations were too anxious to come to an understanding to permit of failure, and Newcastle and his followers once more found themselves in office. Driven into a corner, fearing to offend the king by refusing to come to his assistance, and disheartened by their fruitless efforts in opposition, they took their fate into their hands, and came into power without Pitt.

their offices, and had been anxious that Mackenzie should again be given the post of privy seal of Scotland, only stipulating that this office should be treated as a sinecure and divested of all authority. *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 213, 214.

¹ Add. MS. 32967, f. 186, f. 220; *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 218—220; Lord Despenser was removed, and Mackenzie was not restored, but Lord Litchfield was left in the enjoyment of his office.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROCKINGHAM MINISTRY.

THE ministerial revolution, which took place in July, 1765, constitutes a landmark in the reign of George III. Five years had passed since the king had come to the throne and set to work to regain for the crown the authority it had lost. He had achieved much. He had been able to dispense with the services of Pitt, and had succeeded in driving Newcastle from office. In alliance with Bute, he had freed the country from a lengthy and exhausting contest; and had compelled Wilkes, the popular hero of the hour, to eat the bread of exile. No man could now afford to despise or to neglect the royal power. While yet a young man, and within a few years of his accession George III had materially increased and extended the influence of the crown. But, though his efforts had been attended with a considerable measure of success, his career had not been unchequered by failure and disappointment. He had failed to gain the approval of the nation, and could not claim to play the part which Bolingbroke had designed for a truly constitutional monarch. Nor had he found his ministers always willing to submit to his will. As long as Bute remained in office, the relation between the king and the first minister had been friendly and harmonious; but, when the favourite was succeeded by Grenville, George III was not slow to discover how much he had profited by the friendship of

Bute. The most violent whig could not have been more objectionable to the king than George Grenville and his colleagues. They had forced him to break his word, and had not scrupled to lecture him upon his conduct. He found himself subjected to humiliations such as his grandfather had never endured, and on three separate occasions he appealed to Pitt for deliverance from a tyranny which threatened to become intolerable. When all hope had vanished, and it seemed likely that he would be obliged to surrender himself once more to the tender mercies of Grenville, he was rescued by those whom he had driven from his service, and overwhelmed with indignities and insults. Newcastle and his friends once more found themselves in the service of the crown. Their work lay ready to their hand. A powerful whig administration at this particular juncture could not have failed to exercise a decisive influence upon the course of events. Chastened by recent adversity, and bearing in hourly remembrance what he had suffered, the king might have refrained from intriguing against a ministry strong enough to defend itself. The strained relations between England and the American provinces called for instant measures to be taken, if worse disasters were to be averted; and if the new ministers succeeded in pacifying the provoked colonists without sacrificing the dignity and prestige of the mother country, they would acquire a popularity at home which would go far towards rendering them free from intrigues at court or attacks in parliament.

Unfortunately, however, the administration was not capable of accomplishing the work it had undertaken. Disregarded by the nation, which still centred its affection on Pitt, the whigs had conquered by their weakness and not by their strength. They had not fought their way into the cabinet, and their fortunes had never stood at so

low an ebb as when they were called upon by the king to take office. Death and desertion had thinned their ranks and depressed their spirits. Repudiated by Pitt, it was only after much hesitation that they decided to obey the king and form an administration. Conscious that they possessed but a scanty following in parliament, they knew that they would depend upon the support of those who voted with any government as long as it was approved by the king: a sorry position for men who believed in the principles of party government and in restricting the authority of the crown. A modern ministry in similar circumstances would appeal to the country; but recourse to a general election did not commend itself to the whigs, knowing, as they did, that it would do little to improve their position unless they were allowed to make use of the influence of the crown¹. It was unlikely that the king would permit his ministers to wield in their own interests such a valuable weapon of corruption; and it was probably wiser for them to continue the parliament, as it was, than to appeal to the country on their own merits. The greater safety lay in a policy of inaction, but it was clear that the king would have no cause to fear those whom he could always thwart by rallying the placemen in defence of the throne.

¹ Add. MS. 32969, f. 390. "I admit," wrote Newcastle to Lord Albemarle, "that the administration may have a considerable majority in both houses: but that majority must be made up of their enemies, creatures of the two last administrations, and such as are influenced only by their employments and their interest. Such a majority will last no longer than they find the administration carries everything clearly and roundly. The moment there is the least check, they return to their vomit; and vote according to their conveniences (if they have any) or at least consistently with their manner of voting during this reign." Newcastle, however, was strongly of the opinion that it would be unwise to have a general election if the ministers were not allowed to make use of the influence of the crown in all places. Add. MS. 32969, f. 392.

Thus it seems that the ministers were embarked upon a forlorn hope; and they were but ill qualified for success in such a hazardous enterprise. By taking the office of first lord of the treasury, the Marquis of Rockingham placed himself at the head of the administration¹. Young, wealthy, and neither a time-server nor desirous of political distinction, he was generally liked and respected for his many good qualities. But even his most fervent admirers have never contended that he was adapted by nature to be a leader of men or a champion of a lost cause. Nor can the charm of his private character be held to compensate for his lack of political ability. Shy and retiring by disposition, a poor speaker, and rarely taking part in debate, he was the pilot who shunned rather than weathered the storm. He was not in any sense a great man; and if his colleagues had been men of commanding ability, it is not likely that he would have been more than the figure head of the administration². Unfortunately for him and for the country, his companions in the cabinet were, for the most part, youthful and inexperienced politicians. The two secretaries of state were General Conway and

¹ "The putting my Lord Rockingham at the head of the treasury, and thereby the making him first minister, was done without my immediate knowledge, but very much with my approbation, for I profess to you, now, he is the person in all England I wish there." (*Newcastle's Narrative*, p. 36.)

² Lord Rockingham's secretary was Edmund Burke; and it is not easy to estimate the latter's political influence. In June, 1766, Lord Buckinghamshire wrote to Grenville, "Lord Albemarle and Mr Bourk (I think that is the name not of Lord Rockingham's right hand but of both his hands) evidently direct the wires which move our political puppets there...Mr Bourk, descended from a garret to the head of our administration, is a metaphysician, a man of learning and imagination, a garret is a very proper situation for those who mean to read the stars, but the springs, which decide upon the fate of nations, lay nearer the earth." Add. MS. 22358, f. 35.

the Duke of Grafton. The former had suffered for his political opinions, and was to prove himself the ablest member of the cabinet; but he was seriously deficient in personal charm, and, though capable of inspiring confidence, was not likely to gain popularity¹. The Duke of Grafton had been an active and enthusiastic member of the whig opposition but he was not of the stuff of which great statesmen are made, and was lacking in political experience. Like Rockingham, he was happier on Newmarket heath than in the house of lords; and his private life was not free from scandal. Earlier in his political career, he had attached himself to Pitt who formed a high opinion of his ability; and he had only consented to take office under Rockingham on the condition that directly Pitt should express a wish to join the administration he should be allowed to do so. Thus from the outset an important member of the government was divided in his allegiance, and acknowledged as his leader one who had no place in the ministry.

The most experienced member of the cabinet was, undoubtedly, the Duke of Newcastle. True to the pledge he had given, the old whig leader contented himself with the office of privy seal, to which, however, the ecclesiastical patronage of the crown was annexed². Newcastle was now an old man, and incurred the fate of those who outlive their age. Times had changed, and those who had known him in the heyday of his power were either dead or pursuing an opposite path. The administration, of which he now found himself a member, was largely composed of men who had been boys at school when he

¹ Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 148 ff.

² It has been said that this was done at Newcastle's own request, but the arrangement appears to have been suggested by the king. Add. MS. 32968, f. 264; Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 33.

was already a leading politician. He was a relic of an old world; and, though capable of the self-denial involved in the acceptance of a subordinate office, was not enough of a stoic to bear with equanimity the neglect which would be certain to follow the loss of his influence. But Newcastle was certainly not the only element of weakness in the administration. William Dowdeswell, the chancellor of the exchequer, was a dull though painstaking politician, and little is known of Lord Winchelsea, the lord president of the council. Lord Northington continued as lord chancellor, and would be as likely to be as disloyal to Rockingham as he had been to Grenville; Lord Egmont remained at the admiralty, and Lord Barrington was appointed secretary at war.

The inclusion of Northington, Egmont, and Barrington in an administration, supposed to be representative of whig principles, has been commonly attributed to the influence of the king. Lord Northington certainly had no love for the whig party, and frankly avowed his intention of thwarting and hindering his new colleagues¹; but it is open to doubt whether he owed his inclusion in the cabinet solely to the royal favour. It is by no means unlikely, strange as it may seem, that the whigs were willing, and even anxious, to continue Northington in the office which he had occupied under Grenville. If a new lord chancellor was appointed, the choice would lie between Pratt and Charles Yorke; and it would not be easy to decide between their rival claims. Weighty political interests would be involved in the selection. If Yorke was chosen, Pitt would be deeply offended; and if, in order to please the latter, Pratt was promoted to the woolsack, Charles Yorke and his family would probably vent their disappointment by going into opposition. A

¹ *Grenville Papers*, III. 210.

middle course was consequently adopted. Northington was continued as chancellor, Pratt was created a peer, and Charles Yorke, gratified by the royal promise that he should be created lord chancellor within a year¹, was persuaded to accept his former office of attorney-general. This arrangement was attended by all the dangers of a compromise. The ministers might congratulate themselves upon avoiding an immediate evil, and averting the danger of offending Pitt; but they could hardly be blind to the fact that Northington would always be their enemy. If their hands had been free, if they had not been "in the fell clutch of circumstance," they might have hesitated, even at the risk of offending the king, before allowing such a veteran intriguer to continue in office.

If Egmont and Barrington were less dangerous than Northington, they believed as little as he did in the theories of Newcastle and his friends. Lord Egmont had been a leading member of the Leicester House party, and Barrington, as has been already remarked, adhered to the principle that the first duty of a minister was obedience to the crown. The king was doubtless well pleased that they should be given office, but it is open to question whether the royal wishes would have been considered if more suitable candidates could have been discovered. It is certain that many of the leading politicians of the day were unwilling to risk their reputation by joining a ministry which appeared doomed to disaster. Charles Townshend, who was happy enough as paymaster general, refused to become either chancellor of

¹ Add. MS. 35428, f. 1. Amongst the *Hardwicke Papers* is a document, dated July 4th, 1765, containing an account by Charles Yorke of a conversation with the king. According to Yorke, "the king declared that he was resolved to give him the great seal in less than a twelvemonth (everything on this subject said with earnestness)." Add. MS. 35428, f. 94.

the exchequer or secretary of state; and Hardwicke, Lyttelton and Shelburne were equally reluctant to throw in their lot with what seemed a lost cause¹. Repeating the lesson that Pitt had taught him, Shelburne declared that "measures and not men" would be the rule of his conduct; and Rockingham quickly learned how difficult it is to persuade men to incur the risk of failure.

It cannot be denied that those, who believed the ministers incapable of fulfilling the task they had undertaken, were substantially correct in their opinion. Rockingham and Grafton had still to prove their capacity as statesmen, and nothing that Newcastle could do would destroy the reputation for incapacity which his enemies had fastened upon him. It seemed as if inexperience had linked hands with inefficiency, and the union did not promise success. The ministers, themselves, were conscious of their own weakness. They knew that they had been chosen neither by parliament nor by the people but by the king; and that they depended upon him for the extent and duration of their power. This was but little removed from a state of subservience. If they continued as they had begun, they would either have to violate the principles they professed, or face the prospect of being driven from office the first time they dared to thwart the royal will. It needed no great insight to perceive that if they were to accomplish the work for which they had taken office, and repair the evil which their predecessors had wrought, they must find some other basis for their power than the approval of the court. In office, as in opposition, they found that they needed the assistance of Pitt. Though he had withdrawn into retirement, he remained the national hero, and was still regarded

¹ Add. MS. 32967, f. 193; *Grenville Papers*, III. 67—72; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 234—236.

as the one man capable of bringing peace to a distracted country. The new ministers were confronted by the fact that the confidence of the people would be withheld from any administration of which Pitt was not a member, or to which at least he did not give his approval¹.

No one has ever doubted that the whig leaders were genuinely anxious for his assistance. They had hesitated to act without him, and would probably have refused to come into office unless they had felt confident that he would soon throw in his lot with them. From the outset they sought to please him, and no one was more zealous in this cause than Newcastle. For this reason Pratt was promoted to the peerage as Lord Camden, and negotiations begun for an alliance with Prussia²; but it was all in vain. At one time Rockingham believed that Pitt was favourably inclined towards the ministry³, but rumours to an opposite effect soon began to circulate, and were eagerly credited⁴. When the Duke of Grafton appealed to Pitt to declare his opinions, the latter returned an answer characteristically vague. He blew neither hot nor cold. He neither approved nor condemned the ministry, and disclaimed all responsibility for a cabinet which he had not assisted to construct. He hinted at an objection to the Duke of Newcastle, declaring that he could hardly be expected to give his confidence to an

¹ "Here," wrote Lord Chesterfield to his son in July 1765, "is a new political arch almost built, but of materials of so different a nature, and without a keystone, that it does not, in my opinion, indicate either strength or duration. It will certainly require repairs, and a keystone, next winter; and that keystone will and must necessarily be Mr Pitt." (Chesterfield's *Letters*, edited by John Bradshaw, III. 1322.)

² Add. MS. 32967, f. 354; Add. MS. 32968, f. 166, f. 212.

³ Add. MS. 32967, f. 234.

⁴ Hist. MSS. Comm. Stopford Sackville MS. I. 100—102; *Grenville Papers*, III. 78, 79, 85; *Bedford Correspondence*, III. 315—317.

administration in which that statesman had a seat¹. Short of actual denunciation, nothing could have been less hopeful than this utterance. The objection to the party system, which had prevented Pitt from uniting cordially with the whigs against Bute and Grenville, still dictated his policy. The cabinet had been formed on a plan of which he could not approve because the selection of members had been influenced largely by their political connections. He credited Newcastle, whom he distrusted as the greatest exponent of the party system, with more influence than he actually possessed, and saw in him the guiding spirit of the administration. It was no personal objections, no petty feelings of jealousy, but a difference of principle that divided Pitt from those who were so anxious for his assistance.

Fortunately for their peace of mind, the ministers still remained in happy ignorance of the ground of Pitt's reluctance to extend to them his approval. They lived in hope that one day he would consent to cover them with the lustre of his name. And indeed they had need of all the encouragement they could gain. The future was dark and uncertain, and from the beginning things began to go awry. Newcastle discovered to his vexation that a subordinate position has its drawbacks as well as its advantages, and that youth is often wanting in the respect which age always claims as its due. He found himself neglected by his colleagues who omitted to inform him of what he thought he ought to know; and complained bitterly of the treatment he suffered at the hands of men young enough to be his children². Nor was Newcastle the only discontented member of the administration. Lord Egmont was known not to approve of an alliance

¹ Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 58—59.

² Add. MS. 32969, f. 201, f. 246; Add. MS. 32971, f. 177.

with Prussia, and no reliance could be placed on a political adventurer like Northington. The pillar of strength, to which the ministers clung, was the Duke of Cumberland. Unfortunately, he was now waning in health and crippled by disease. Fate had not dealt kindly with him. In the course of a long life he had suffered much sadness and many disappointments. Successful in his campaign against the jacobites, he had acquired a reputation as a general which he speedily lost by his failure in the seven years' war. By his treatment of the Scotch rebels, he had earned a name for cruelty which was remembered long after men had forgotten that he had saved England from a great disaster. After the death of his elder brother, it was commonly thought that he was scheming to supplant his nephew on the throne; and during the early years of his reign, George III was not on friendly terms with his uncle whom he distrusted as a supporter of the opposition. When, however, Cumberland rescued the king from the tyranny of Grenville, he was once more taken into favour at court; and was, therefore, in a position to play the part of mediator between the crown and the Rockingham administration, should occasion arise. Nor was it by any means unlikely that the ministers would have need of his services. There was work to be done, especially in regard to the American colonies, which might easily provoke a misunderstanding between the king and his servants; and at such a crisis, Cumberland could have rendered invaluable assistance. He frequently attended cabinet councils¹, and might have succeeded in guiding the administration through many dangerous channels; but death took him when he was most needed. He died suddenly on the last day of October, 1765, and the whigs lost a friend whom they could ill afford to spare.

¹ Grafton's *Autobiography*, p. 55.

The immediate effect of Cumberland's death was to weaken the administration, and to render Pitt's assistance all the more necessary. As the ministers were now less certain of the support of the court, it was incumbent upon them to endeavour to win the approval of the nation. Newcastle has often been accused of gross selfishness and base treachery; but, on this occasion at least, his conduct must satisfy the most captious of his critics. He saw the opportunity, and was anxious to take it, even to his own undoing. Though fully aware that Pitt bore him no good will, he was ready to sacrifice himself for the cause he had at heart. He understood that the assistance of Pitt was more indispensable than ever, and urged that a message should be sent to him, believing that all would go well if the world could be convinced that Pitt approved of the administration. It would be enough if he consented to accept a peerage at the hands of the ministers¹. The king and Rockingham agreed to the proposal, and it was arranged that Grafton, who would be likely to receive a favourable hearing, should open the negotiation. It is possible that the young duke might have found his task unexpectedly easy. A few days after Cumberland's death, Pitt, writing to Thomas Walpole, mentioned that "those who with me have stood by the cause of liberty and the national honour upon true revolution principles, will never find me against them till they fall off and do not act up to those principles²." Walpole, understanding this message to mean that Pitt was prepared to join the administration, communicated the important passages in

¹ Add. MS. 32971, f. 289. "Your grace," wrote Newcastle to Grafton, "knows Mr Pitt's disposition towards me too well to imagine that I can have any view in this with regard to myself. I mean only the king's service, the quiet and satisfaction of the nation, and the ease and success of his majesty's present ministers." *Ibid.*

² *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 328—330.

the letter to Rockingham, and informed Pitt of what he had done. If Walpole was correct in his interpretation, the ministry could not have chosen a better time at which to make an overture; and Newcastle was greatly disgusted to learn that his scheme had been abandoned. He at least was not to blame for any ill effects that followed.

It is impossible to dogmatise on Pitt's inclinations at this moment, and Rockingham may have been right in thinking that an exaggerated importance had been attached to a stray remark; but, when all deductions are made, it must be admitted that the ministers failed to avail themselves of what might have proved to be a favourable opportunity. It is not improbable that Pitt was offended by the independent attitude adopted by them; and, if this was the case, it would account for the increased hostility he displayed towards Newcastle. The old duke was made the scapegoat for an offence of which he was entirely guiltless¹.

It is in vain to speculate upon the cause of Rockingham's reluctance to approach Pitt. Youthful, and of a sanguine temperament, he may easily have underrated the difficulties which confronted him, and imagined that an appeal to the great commoner would be construed as a sign of weakness. Nor was it only in this particular that the ministers, or at least some of them, appeared prepared to run the risk of alienating the man whom they wished to have as an ally. The idea of a treaty with Prussia was abandoned², and the office of vice-treasurer of Ireland was conferred upon Lord George Sackville. Pitt had neither forgotten nor forgiven Sackville's be-

¹ Add. MS. 32971, f. 289, f. 341; Add. MS. 32972, f. 21, f. 60, f. 95; Add. MS. 32973, f. 230, f. 244; *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 333, 342, 343, 345, 346.

² Add. MS. 32972, f. 126.

haviour at the battle of Minden; and his promotion to a place in the administration would be counted as a new offence committed by the ministers. Not Newcastle, but Rockingham, Grafton, and Conway were responsible for this unfortunate exercise of ministerial patronage; and it is to their discredit that they refused to listen to the advice of one who was older and, on this occasion at least, wiser than they were¹. Thus Rockingham and his colleagues stand convicted of pursuing a policy only too likely to arouse the anger of the man whom they should have sought to please. Little more than four months had elapsed since they had taken office; but during that time they had lost a valuable ally at court, and had succeeded in widening the breach between themselves and Pitt. In the eyes of the public the administration appeared no more stable than it did at the beginning of its career; and it is not surprising that both North and Barré refused places in a ministry which seemed doomed to a speedy destruction².

The outlook was all the more serious inasmuch as bad news was coming from America. The glove, which Grenville had thrown down, had been quickly taken up by the colonists; and the stamp act had been met with a storm of opposition. The first step had been taken along the road which was to lead to the most disastrous war waged by England during the 18th century. In spite of the restrictions imposed in the interests of the mother country, trade and industry had generally flourished

¹ Add. MS. 32972, f. 93, f. 100, f. 126. "I own," writes Newcastle to Rockingham on December 1st, "I am very doubtful what effect Lord George's accession will have; with our own friends certainly a bad one. But what I lament the most, I am afraid it will quite alienate Mr Pitt; and I know our good friend Jemmy Grenville...I dread this of Lord George Sackville, I am sure you do the same." Add. MS. 32972, f. 95.

² Add. MS. 32972, f. 95.

throughout the plantations; and the conditions of life were such as to foster a spirit of independence and a resentment of interference. The colonists were in no mood to suffer what they considered a new and unjustifiable imposition; and Grenville, who, at the worst was guilty of legal pedantry and lack of statesmanship, presented himself to their imaginations as a dark and brooding tyrant intent upon destroying liberty wherever he found it. The Virginian house of burgesses declared against the stamp act on the ground that it violated the principle of no taxation without representation. In Boston and other towns serious riots broke out. The new stamps were seized and destroyed, and those commissioned to put the act into execution, discharged their duties at the peril of their lives. An assembly, which styled itself a congress of the committee of the several houses of representatives of the British colonies, met at New York, and passed a resolution that the stamp act tended to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonists¹, and from Massachusetts Bay and Rhode Island came petitions to the king and parliament asking for the repeal of the obnoxious tax².

It was impossible for any statesman to avoid recognising the serious character of the opposition which had thus been aroused by Grenville's ill-judged measure. The discontent, which had been evoked, was not confined to a single province; and the mother country found itself threatened by what might prove to be a national resistance. By his assertion of the rights of parliament over the colonists, Grenville had sown the seeds of revolution in a soil prepared for their reception; and those, who succeeded him in office, had to solve a difficulty which was not of their own making. It was a task

¹ Add. MS. 32971, f. 113.

² Add. MS. 32971, f. 116, f. 120.

which might have taxed the strength and discretion of the most efficient administration.

The problem was by no means easy of solution. The right of parliament to levy an internal tax in America had been definitely asserted and as definitely repudiated; and the ministers had to discover the proper course to pursue towards those who refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the mother country. It was a question not for lawyers but for statesmen to decide. If the English government, disregarding the complaints of the colonists, insisted upon the enforcement of the act, it might be necessary to have recourse to the sword. England might prevail in the struggle, but it would be at the cost of a legacy of hatred and bitterness which would take many years to eradicate. But an opposite line of policy was not without serious disadvantages. It is always easy to mistake conciliation for weakness. If the stamp act was repealed in answer to the complaints of the colonists, further concessions might be demanded from the mother country. Encouraged by their success, the Americans might seek to free their trade from the restrictions imposed by England; and, by gradual encroachment, presume on the conciliatory spirit of the government until their demand for independence became irresistible. Thus the problem, which confronted the ministers, was one of no small difficulty. Whatever solution was adopted, it would be certain to meet with hostile criticism. Grenville, who had the legal cast of mind, and could not understand that it is not always expedient to enforce a right, could be counted upon to oppose the repeal or modification of his measure; and he would have the support of his brother, Lord Temple, who in this particular was in agreement with him. It was also likely that many would oppose any modification of the

stamp act, regarding such a policy as a concession to rebellion and the establishment of a dangerous precedent. On the other hand, Pitt had already declared his disapproval of the act, and if the ministers determined to uphold it, they must forswear all hope of ever persuading him to throw in his lot with them. Thus many factors had to be taken into consideration before it was possible to arrive at a decision. It might be wise to restore peace in America and to purchase the support of Pitt; but it would be at the risk of arousing the opposition of a powerful party in parliament and, perhaps, of offending the king. The arguments in favour of opposite policies were too evenly balanced for a decision to be easy.

Parliament was summoned to meet early in January, 1766¹, and it was foreseen that the American question would be the most important subject of debate. The ministers were not united on a policy; the crisis, which had thus suddenly arisen, found them unprepared. Some were in favour of a total repeal of the act; others preferred modification. When the cabinet met on December 27th, there was a clear divergence of opinion. There was a general agreement to assert the legislative rights of parliament over the colonies by means of a declaratory act; but they could not determine whether the stamp act should be repealed or only modified². The question was far too important to be left thus undecided; and the ministers turned to Pitt for advice and assistance. Thomas Townshend was sent to Bath to learn Pitt's views on the American question, and to invite him to

¹ Parliament had met on Dec. 17th, 1765, but only to be prorogued to the following January.

² Add. MS. 32973, f. 3, f. 11; Adolphus' *History of England*, i. 197, 198. It is interesting to note that Newcastle, who was not present at this cabinet meeting, was opposed to the idea of a declaratory act. Add. MS. 32973, f. 25.

join the administration¹. It was unfortunate that this appeal for assistance had not been made earlier; for when it came it found Pitt in no compliant humour. Chagrined perhaps because he had not been approached before, he refused to express an opinion on the American question, save to the king or parliament; and, though professing willingness to take office under the crown and to serve with Rockingham, Conway, and Grafton, he demanded, as a condition of his acceptance, that Newcastle should be excluded from the ministry, and that the treasury should be offered to Lord Temple. If, however, Temple still declined to take that office, Pitt was willing that Rockingham should retain it².

These were hard terms for the ministers to digest, and both Newcastle and Rockingham had cause for offence. The latter could not but be vexed at being called upon to make way for Temple, and upon Newcastle fell the whole weight of Pitt's anger and distrust. It was not a conciliatory answer to a friendly overture, and it is difficult to censure Rockingham for refusing to submit to conditions so imperiously dictated. Yet in so doing he was guilty of a blunder. It was worth making a great sacrifice in order to gain the assistance which Pitt alone could give; and the loss of Newcastle would have been but a trifling price to pay. Nor was the latter unwilling to play the rôle of victim to political necessity. Rising above himself, he proved, by his conduct at this crisis, that a long course of corrupting others had not destroyed the nobler elements in his composition.

¹ Add. MS. 32973, f. 11, f. 55; Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 62, 63. Grafton asserts that Pitt was asked to place himself at the head of the administration; but this statement is not supported by either Newcastle or Rockingham.

² Add. MS. 32973, f. 55.

He was ready and even anxious to retire from the administration, rather than stand in the way of Pitt's return to power¹, and it was Rockingham who refused to submit to the will of the great commoner. Grafton and Conway desired that the king should invite Pitt to confer with him; but the prime minister firmly and successfully opposed the idea of making any further concessions to the man who had so grossly insulted those who bore him only good-will. His influence prevailed: no message was sent to Pitt, but it remained undetermined whether, should he attend parliament, the king would grant him an audience after a levée².

Grafton was aggrieved at this decision. He had only taken office on the understanding that Pitt should be allowed to join the ministry when he liked; and he felt that the pledge had not been fulfilled. An opportunity had been lost, and Grafton began to think of severing his connection with men who had failed to keep their word. Conway, though less prejudiced in favour of Pitt, was also of the opinion that a serious blunder had been made. Rockingham, however, refused to listen to the advice of his secretaries of state; but his determination to persevere in an undertaking, which to others seemed hopeless, must not be attributed to a mean desire to retain office at all cost. Though often lacking in under-

¹ "I immediately sent my good friend, Mr White, yesterday to my Lord Rockingham, to acquaint his Lordship, as I intend to do to-morrow the king, that I have ever been so much of opinion that it was for the service of his majesty and the nation that Mr Pitt should be employed, that I could not suffer myself to be the avowed obstacle to it; and that I therefore desired to resign my employment to remove that obstacle." Newcastle to Page, January 7th, 1766. Add. MS. 32973, f. 55.

² Add. MS. 32973, f. 55, f. 100, f. 104, f. 117; *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 262—268; Newcastle's *Narrative*, pp. 43—47; Grafton's *Autobiography*, pp. 62, 63.

standing, he was not of that order of politicians who think solely of their own advantage. He was only too likely to minimise the dangers which threatened him, and rashly to believe himself secure of the support of the court¹. Moreover, his pride may justly have been wounded by Pitt's demands. He had not striven for high office, and was not consumed by political ambition; but he might well feel hurt at being asked to make way for a statesman of such little eminence as Temple. He might find it difficult to remain a member of an administration which had suffered a fundamental change, and assumed a different complexion²; yet, though acting in no ungenerous spirit, he stands convicted of a serious error of judgment. He misread the signs of the times which really left him no alternative but to accept Pitt on his own terms. By appealing to Caesar, and then refusing to take the Caesarian answer, the administration had struck a blow at its own power; it had confessed its weakness and displayed its obstinacy.

It was, therefore, in no spirit of triumph that the ministers met parliament when it assembled on January 14th. In his speech from the throne, the king specially commended the troubles in the colonies to the attention of the two houses. Pitt was present, and took a prominent part in the debate which followed the king's speech. As he rose to address the house, all eyes were turned on the man who, though without office, was more powerful than any minister. When he seemed about to conclude, loud cries encouraged him to continue. He did not condescend to tell his hearers what they would have liked to hear. He espoused an unpopular cause, and proclaimed himself the champion of American freedom. He denounced the stamp act as inexpedient and illegal. He denied that

¹ Add. MS. 32973, f. 21.

² Add. MS. 32973, f. 55.

parliament had the right of levying an internal tax on America; and not only excused but congratulated the colonists upon their resistance. "I rejoice," he exclaimed in a phrase which was to become famous, "that America has resisted." Turning to the ministers, he expressed his approval of them, but refused to give them his confidence: "confidence," he remarked with bitter emphasis, "is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom." He was careful to describe himself as unconnected and unconsulted; and if his words gladdened the hearts of the Americans, they must have depressed the spirits of members of the administration. He had gone out of his way to strike a blow at the ministers; and by publicly withholding his confidence had confirmed what before had only been a rumour. Men now knew that Pitt was in no way connected with the administration, and drew their conclusions accordingly.

Rockingham was wise enough to understand that an effort must be made to counteract the baneful influence of a few words spoken in debate. Pitt must be persuaded to undo the evil he had wrought, by consenting to join the administration. Another attempt must be made to gain his assistance; and, in one respect, there was a greater prospect of success than before. In the debate in the upper house on January 14th, Temple had roundly declared in favour of the stamp act; and it was possible that this might prejudice Pitt against him¹. Grafton visited Pitt on January 16th, and two days later the same nobleman and Rockingham conveyed a message to him from the king. He was requested to say whether he would consent to take office, and whether he still desired that Lord Temple should be given an opportunity of joining the administration. The answer could have

¹ *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 270, 271.

been little pleasing to Rockingham, differing as it did but slightly from that returned on the previous occasion. Pitt declared himself ready to serve the king in a ministerial capacity, and to act with Rockingham, Conway, and Grafton; but he again demanded that Newcastle should be excluded from the administration, and Temple allowed to take office if he wished to do so. Moreover, the ministry was to be subjected to changes and alterations which, however much the fact was disguised, would probably amount to a dissolution of the existing cabinet¹.

Such a reply, unwelcome as it was, might have been expected. Prepared to come to the assistance of his king and his country, Pitt did not intend either to lead or serve in an administration which was not of his own making. His influence must predominate in the government, and Newcastle must be banished because it was wrongly imagined that, whatever place he occupied in the cabinet, he would always tend to lead rather than to follow². It may be true that Pitt was justified in formulating such terms, but it is not surprising that Rockingham was loath to accept them. Few men are willing to make a public confession of failure; and Rockingham had also to think of those who had acted with him in opposition, and were now his colleagues in the cabinet. If he sacrificed them in order to fulfil Pitt's demands, he would run the risk of being accused of

¹ Add. MS. 32973, f. 148, f. 158, f. 180, f. 194; Grafton's *Autobiography*, p. 64 ff.; *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 371. Grafton's account differs in certain particulars from that given by Rockingham (Add. MS. 32973, f. 194). The former states that Pitt was willing that no offer should be made to Lord Temple; but it is difficult to believe this statement, seeing that Pitt, when called upon to come into office six months later, was quite prepared to have Temple as a colleague.

² Add. MS. 32973, f. 237.

treachery towards those who, whatever their shortcomings, had at least always loyally supported him. Yet, whatever blame attaches to the refusal of Pitt's terms, must rest not on Rockingham but on George III. The king, had he chosen to do so, could have sent for Pitt, and instructed him to form an administration in accordance with the conditions he had formulated. This he was not willing to do; and, having heard Pitt's answer, decided to discontinue the negotiation¹. Such conduct is difficult to explain if it be believed that the king was fretting under the rule of the whigs. But of such discontent there is no trace. The ministers had not yet come into conflict with the royal will; and their very weakness and lack of popular support commended them to the king. He might fare far worse with Pitt in power, and had little need to anticipate danger from those who would be unlikely to find either defenders or sympathisers if attacked by the court.

Thus the second attempt to gain the support of Pitt had failed; but the ministers, enlightened by his speech in parliament, were aware of his views on the American question. Now that he had spoken, they were prepared to act. At a meeting at Lord Rockingham's house on January 17th, it was decided to repeal the stamp act, and to introduce a declaratory bill, asserting the rights of parliament over the colonies². This was an attempt to solve the difficulty by a compromise, and had all the defects

¹ Add. MS. 32973, f. 194, f. 224, f. 237; *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 271, 272.

² "Charles Townshend and General Conway, Dowdeswell, and the Duke of Grafton were here this evening. The ideas we join in are nearly what I talked of to you this morning, that is—a declaratory act in general terms,—afterwards to proceed to considerations of trade, etc., and finally determination on the stamp act, i.e. a repeal." Rockingham to Charles Yorke (endorsed 17th January, 1766). Add. MS. 35430, f. 31.

of timid statesmanship. In deciding upon a policy of repeal, the ministers must have been greatly influenced by Pitt's opinion. It was the only course open to them, unless they were prepared to drive him into violent opposition. If, stopping half-way, they had advocated the modification rather than the repeal of the act, they would find both Grenville and Pitt against them; and it was therefore wiser to proceed further. Yet there would be many who would regard the policy of repeal as an unworthy concession to rebellion; and the king, though prepared to see the stamp act removed from the statute book, was anxious that the rights of the mother country over the colonies should be definitely asserted¹. Thus the declaratory act was an attempt to propitiate those who would only grudgingly consent to a policy of which they did not approve. Pitt might well be offended, for he had denounced the stamp act not only as unjust but illegal; and it was to spare his susceptibilities that, though the declaratory act asserted the authority of the king and parliament over the colonies in all matters, no mention was made of the power of taxation². It was not a strong position for men to take up who were responsible for the destinies of the nation. Rockingham was alarmed at the prospect of the parliamentary opposition which might be evoked by concessions to America³; and sought to avert the danger by a measure which was to prove a rock of offence to Pitt⁴. Much

¹ *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 271, 272.

² Charles Yorke was opposed to this omission. Add. MS. 35430, f. 37.

³ Add. MS. 35430, f. 37.

⁴ In defence of Rockingham it should be stated that from a conversation with Pitt on Tuesday, January 21st, he gained the impression that the latter was not violently opposed to a declaratory act. "As to the affair," wrote Rockingham, "Mr Pitt declared strongly for the repeal of the stamp act; but as to the other parts of the question, the

would depend upon the attitude adopted by the king. He had unwillingly consented to the repeal of the stamp act, regarding the concession as a necessary evil. Were he to find that his ministers had exaggerated the necessity, he might easily come to believe that he had been tricked by them. Thus on all sides danger threatened the administration. Ominous signs of parliamentary opposition soon began to appear. On the last day of January the government was run close in the house of commons on the trifling question of a Scotch petition. The tories and the friends of Lord Bute voted against the ministry which only prevailed by a scanty majority¹. A few days later the opposition carried a question against the government in the house of lords. Bute and his followers openly attacked the king's servants, and the favourite made no secret of his intention to oppose the repeal of the stamp act².

The danger, which thus threatened the ministers, was far too serious to be neglected with safety. Grafton, weary of existence in a cabinet without Pitt, advocated that the administration should be dissolved; but he failed to persuade his colleagues to take so final a step³. They endeavoured to protect themselves under the shield of the court, trumpeting abroad that the king approved of the repeal of the stamp act. They could not have pursued a more disastrous course. The king had assented to the policy of his ministers, but he had not approved it. He would have preferred the stamp act to be

asserting the right of the parliament, Mr Pitt did not seem so strong as he was the other day in his speech." Add. MS. 32973, f. 237.

¹ Add. MS. 32973, f. 321; Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 196.

² *Grenville Papers*, III. 357—359; Newcastle's *Narrative*, pp. 47 ff.; Hist. MSS. Comm. Stopford Sackville MSS., I. 106—108; Chesterfield's *Letters* (edited by Bradshaw), III. 1334, 1335.

³ Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 47.

modified, and had only consented to its repeal when he was informed that there was no alternative between that and enforcement. He had concealed his preference for modification as he had promised to support his ministers¹; but when he learnt that his name was being used to influence men's political opinions, he threw off the restraint which he had imposed upon himself. He informed Lord Strange that he would prefer modification to repeal, and Strange published the news abroad². When charged by Rockingham with going back upon his word, he justified himself by asserting that he had only consented to the repeal of the act, because he was given to understand that it was impossible to modify it³.

The confusion had been caused more by misunderstanding than duplicity. The ministers had failed to grasp that the royal consent was only conditional, and the king had not troubled to make his meaning sufficiently clear. The incident is important, inasmuch as it is the first serious breach between the king and the administration. The ministers had staked everything upon the support of the court; and that appeared about to fail them. They found themselves compelled "to carry on a great public measure against the king's declared sentiments, and with a great number of his servants acting against them⁴." Estranged from Pitt, and held in little account by the nation, they found themselves more isolated and helpless than ever. They had built their house upon the sands, and discovered the insecurity of the foundations when the first storm arose.

If for a time they prevailed in parliament, it was only

¹ *Grenville Papers*, III. 353.

² *Grenville Papers*, III. 362.

³ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 300, 301.

⁴ Conway to Lord Hertford, February 12th, 1766; quoted in Hunt's *Political History of England, 1760—1801*, p. 71.

by dint of hard fighting; and their success was not unchequered by failure. It was necessary for them to be prepared to meet the criticism of Pitt, as well as encounter the opposition of their habitual opponents. On January 27th a petition from a body, styling itself the American congress, was presented to the house of commons which refused to accept it. This was in conformity with the wishes of the ministers, but Pitt seized the occasion to declare once more that the Americans were justified in their resistance to a tyrannical act which violated the original contract between the sovereign power and the colonists¹. When on February 3rd Conway introduced the resolution "that Great Britain had, hath, and ought to have full right and power to bind the Americans in all cases whatsoever," he found himself opposed by Pitt who bitterly reflected, the day after the battle, that the commons had assented to "England's right to do what the treasury pleases with three millions of freemen²." Nor was it only Pitt's opposition that the ministers were called upon to face. In the course of one week they suffered two defeats in the upper house; and though in the house of commons they succeeded in holding their own against their enemies, the outlook was sufficiently serious³. As far at least as the house of lords was concerned, there was every sign that the repeal of the stamp act would encounter a fierce opposition, and only those, who have never known what it is to flinch before danger, can censure Rockingham for thinking of resigna-

¹ Hist. MSS. Comm. Stopford Sackville MSS., I. 105, 106; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 290, 291.

² *Grenville Papers*, III. 357; *Chatham Correspondence*, III. 363—370: the letter in the Chatham correspondence is misdated.

³ Add. MS. 35374, f. 284; Hist. MSS. Comm. Stopford Sackville MSS., I. 106, 108; *Grenville Papers*, III. 357—359; *Newcastle's Narrative*, pp. 47, 51; *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 375—377.

tion¹. He now knew that he would have to encounter the attack of the solid phalanx of placemen who thought to please the king by opposing his servants; and in his hour of need he again turned to Pitt for assistance.

No greater success was to attend these new overtures than those which had preceded them. Lord Shelburne was selected to act as intermediary, and Rockingham frankly confessed to him how necessary it was for the administration to establish friendly relations with Pitt. The latter, however, proved himself as intractable as before. He refused to take office at the hand of Rockingham, preferring to wait until he received the king's command to form an administration. To a message through Nuthall, asking him to frame a plan of a ministry, and then discuss it with Rockingham and the two secretaries of state, a similar answer was returned; only at the king's request would Pitt consent to express his sentiments: and Rockingham refused to carry a message from the court². That would be equivalent to his own resignation and the dissolution of the cabinet over which he presided. Between him and Pitt lay a difference of principle which could neither be neglected nor reconciled. It was not the policy but the composition of the cabinet that was at stake. Rockingham was the champion, and Pitt the opponent, of the party system, and neither would give way in the struggle. The youthful prime minister was confronted by a choice between two grim alternatives. He must either abandon his post and confess to failure before he had suffered defeat, or continue to strive against apparently overwhelmingly odds. It is to his credit that he chose the nobler if the

¹ *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 303.

² Add. MS. 32974, f. 417; Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 379—382; *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 397—402; *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 311—313.

more hazardous course. As Pitt refused his assistance, except on terms too humiliating to be accepted, Rockingham took his fate into his hands, and continued the battle unaided.

On Friday, February 21st, Conway moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the stamp act¹. He enlarged upon the damage inflicted by that measure upon English merchants trading with America; and the excited crowd, largely composed of men interested in American trade, which thronged the passages and gathered in the lobbies of the house, proved that Conway was speaking the truth and not having resort to a rhetorical device. The debate continued for many hours, and it was not until a new day had dawned that the motion was carried by a majority of one hundred and eight. It is unnecessary to follow in detail the passage of either the repeal bill or the declaratory act through the two houses. In spite of the opposition of a host of placemen², both measures were carried; and the ministers enjoyed a triumph, the greater because it was unexpected. Their success is somewhat surprising, considering the difficulties they encountered; and it is open to doubt whether the king was so actively antagonistic to the repeal of the stamp act as has been often assumed. Save for his remark to Lord Strange, there is no proof that he intrigued against his ministers; and it may have been due to the moderation of the crown that the government was not pushed harder than it actually was³.

¹ Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 210, 211.

² For a list of the placemen who voted against repeal in both houses, see Appendix III.

³ "The repeal was carried in both houses by the ministers against the king's declared inclinations, which is a case that has seldom happened, and I believe seldom will happen. Lord Bute's conduct has been, through all this affair, extremely irresolute and undecided." Chesterfield's *Letters* (edited by Bradshaw), III. 1336.

The king was wise in his generation. By thwarting the repeal bill, he might have added to his unpopularity with the nation; and he did not have to fear, as a result of his inactivity, an increase in the popularity of the administration. The gratitude of the people was given not to the ministers but to Pitt. It was he who received the laurels of victory. He had never wavered in his opposition to the stamp act, and had declared for repeal when the cabinet was too divided in opinion to be able to formulate a policy. He reaped the reward of his consistency. The whigs had borne the brunt of the battle, but he acquired the glory¹. The great measure had been carried, but the administration had gained neither in strength nor reputation.

The ministers could not conceal from themselves that they had failed in office as they had failed in opposition. They had not succeeded in gaining the approval of the nation, or in retaining the support of the court; and shattered were the hopes which they had cherished of Pitt's assistance. The king refused to punish the placemen who had voted against the repeal bill; and thus all, who were anxious to oppose the government, knew that they could do so with impunity. Perhaps because they realised how short was the time at their disposal, Rockingham and his colleagues were not sparing of their energy. The remainder of the parliamentary session was not wasted. General warrants were declared illegal, and the obnoxious cyder tax repealed; but, beneficial as these measures may have been, they failed to add to the prestige of the government. In the panegyric which he pronounced upon the ministers after their fall from power, Burke laid stress upon their legislative activity, and proudly

¹ Newcastle's *Narrative*, pp. 75, 76; Hist. MSS. Comm. Round MS. 14th Report, Appendix, ix, p. 298.

asserted that they had left "their king and their country in a much better condition than they found them¹." This is undoubtedly true, but it was not correct to say, as Burke did, that the Rockingham administration was "supported by the confidence of the nation." It was because they were lacking in this, that they found themselves unable to overcome the various forces opposed to them.

The end did not, however, come suddenly: it was heralded by a long drawn-out agony. The Duke of Grafton, who had so long talked of resignation, executed his threat at the end of April. For many months he had continued in office under protest. He had only consented to join the administration on the understanding that Pitt should be allowed to take his place in it directly he desired to do so; and he was aggrieved that this condition had not been fulfilled. In order to induce him to remain, a final, but equally unsuccessful, attempt was made to win Pitt. The ministers could have had little hope of success attending these overtures, but the negotiation has an interest, since it afforded Pitt an opportunity to speak out more clearly than he had ever done before. He revealed the reason of his antipathy to the Rockingham administration which, he declared, must be remodelled on non-party lines. The best and ablest members of all parties must be summoned to serve the king, and the value of men estimated, not by their political connections, but by their ability to promote the glory and prosperity of England².

The resignation of Grafton was the beginning of the end, and when, from his place in the house of lords, the former secretary of state declared that he had left the

¹ *Short Account of a late Short Administration.*

² *Newcastle's Narrative*, pp. 57, 58.

administration because, in his opinion, it lacked "authority, dignity and extension¹," he revealed to the public gaze the skeleton in the ministerial cupboard. The ministers might have prolonged their tenure of official life by an alliance with Lord Bute and his party; but they shrank from so ignoble a surrender of the principles which they had maintained in opposition². Newcastle advised that the parliamentary session should be concluded as soon as possible, and measures taken to placate the placemen³; but such a makeshift policy was powerless to avert the doom which threatened them. Nor were their chances of survival increased by the appointment of the Duke of Richmond as Grafton's successor. The vacant post had been offered to Lord Hardwicke and his brother, Charles Yorke; but the former, though he agreed to take a seat in the cabinet without office, was unwilling to become secretary of state, and Charles Yorke was not to be diverted from the goal of his ambition⁴. The appointment of Richmond was not pleasing to the king who declared that he had been forced by Rockingham to approve it⁵; nor was the new secretary of state likely to be of much assistance to his colleagues. He had had little political experience, and it is worthy of remark that Horace Walpole favoured the appointment on the strange ground that Richmond was likely to give way to his native indolence if not given employment⁶. Yet, if the selection of Richmond was a

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, II. 421; *Grenville Papers*, III. 242.

² Newcastle's *Narrative*, p. 60; Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 228, 229.

³ Add. MS. 32975, f. 72.

⁴ Add. MS. 35428, f. 22; Add. MS. 32975, f. 254; *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 330, 331, 333; *Grenville Papers*, III. 240.

⁵ Add. MS. 32975, f. 254.

⁶ Walpole's *Memoirs*, II. 229. Lord Buckinghamshire remarked in a letter to Grenville: "Apropos to the Duke of Richmond, as the whig administration, thinking it necessary always to have a secretary of

mistake, it was one of little account, seeing that the ministers were rapidly passing beyond all hope of redemption. If they continued to survive for a few weeks longer, it was only because they were sufficiently weak to be tolerated with safety. The king remained in command of the situation, and was able to refuse the requests of his servants with impunity. He declined to create new peers at their bidding, or to remove those who attacked them in parliament¹. It was clear to all men that the end could not be far off. Rockingham may have blundered when he omitted to secure the consent of parliament to a provision for the king's younger brothers², but it is not to this mistake that he owed his downfall. Though the administration had only been in existence for a year, it displayed all the symptoms of old age and decay. Even its admirers did not wish it to survive. When a false rumour was spread that the king had sent for Pitt, Lord Albemarle, a staunch supporter of the whig party, rejoiced that his friends had been relieved from an impossible situation³. The death blow came early in July. At a cabinet meeting at the end of June, the lord chancellor quarrelled with the ministers, and declared his intention of ceasing to attend the cabinet⁴. He informed the king that he desired to resign his office. In an interview with Rockingham, George III laid stress upon the gravity of the situation, and remarked that he must seriously consider the proper course to be taken⁵. By the following day he had decided upon a line of action, and summoned Pitt

state of the race of Charles II (for what other motives could determine them) have appointed His Grace to succeed the Duke of Grafton, the Duke of St Albans is next heir to the seals, and we may yet live to see them in the hands of the Duke of Cleveland." Add. MS. 22358, f. 35.

¹ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 347; *Grenville Papers*, III. 253.

² Add. MS. 35428, f. 22.

³ Add. MS. 32975, f. 414.

⁴ *Rockingham Memoirs*, I. 350.

⁵ Add. MS. 32976, f. 19.

to visit him. The decisive step had been taken, and the Rockingham administration had ceased to exist.

The element of tragedy in the history of this whig ministry is that, with the best intentions in the world, it failed because it deserved to fail. Since it had first come into being, it had waned rather than waxed in strength. It had sought salvation by works, and discovered, to its dismay, that nothing it could do would gain for it the faith which alone could justify it in the eyes of the nation. It is true that it had not been favoured by circumstances. The death of Cumberland had been a heavy blow, and the ministers had not foreseen the attitude which Pitt would adopt. They had, moreover, alienated the sympathy of the king, and thus deprived of the very prop of their power, the essential weakness of the ministry could no longer be concealed. It suffered the fate which is marked out for all who depend for their strength upon external assistance. Rockingham and his companions had embarked upon a noble and difficult undertaking, and they had failed to achieve success. It is true that they had initiated and passed measures likely to benefit the country and restore harmonious relations between England and her American colonies; but they had not fulfilled their first and greatest duty, that of keeping themselves in power. The country needed a powerful and stable administration, and Rockingham was unable to give it what it needed. He could do nothing without Pitt, and the latter persistently refused his assistance or protection.

The fall of the whigs, and the accession of Pitt to power, closes and begins an epoch in the reign of George III. Six years had passed since the king had ascended the throne, an untried and inexperienced boy, and within that short time he had succeeded in making the authority of the crown more of a reality than it had been since the

death of Queen Anne. With marked courage he had entered upon a contest with the most popular statesman and the most successful party manager of the day, and had emerged victorious; but his triumph had only been obtained after a sharp struggle, the issue of which sometimes seemed uncertain. Driven from office, Newcastle and his friends had upheld in opposition those principles of party government to which they owed their success in the past; and although the battle had been fierce and intense, the king possessed the inestimable advantage of being able to turn against his opponents the very weapons they had used in the days of their predominance. It says much for Newcastle's political insight that he understood, more clearly than any of his associates, that, unable to bribe and corrupt as had been their wont, the whigs must attack the government in the name of the nation, and prevail against the crown by becoming the popular party. In order to attain this end, it was necessary that Pitt should become a member of the opposition, or at least extend to it his approval; and by July, 1766, it was evident to all men that the great commoner had definitely abandoned all belief in the party system. Henceforward it was vain for the whigs to look to him for any assistance. He had decided against the principles which they professed, and proved his faith by forming an administration which Burke aptly compared to a piece of uncemented tessellated pavement. The national hero of the day had declared himself on the side of the crown; and if Newcastle mourned the loss of an indispensable ally, the king could congratulate himself upon the acquisition of a most valuable recruit.

Thus the period ends in a royal triumph and a whig defeat. The principles of party government, repudiated by Pitt, and discredited by the downfall of the Rockingham

administration, seemed about to fall into the oblivion which engulfs effete political ideas. George II had been avenged by his grandson, and the power, granted by the revolution settlement, restored to the monarchy. From 1766 until the fall of Lord North in 1782, it was the king who governed in the name of his servants. Largely responsible for the policy which resulted in the outbreak of the war of American independence, playing an active and predominant part in the unconstitutional crusade against Wilkes, George III, though successful, gave an instructive lesson in the evils of personal government.

The royal industry, disastrous as it was in many respects, was not wholly unproductive of good results, inasmuch as it enabled men to understand that the party system was not a mere mechanical contrivance, by means of which a few men ruled the country, but an essential part of the political machinery for restraining the authority of the crown. Many years after his death Newcastle was justified by the son of the man who had refused him assistance in the hour of need. In his relations with the duke, Pitt was guilty of a grave political blunder. During the early years of the reign it had been within his power to render the whig party an effective force, and he had refused to do so; and it is in accordance with the usual irony of history that the man, who had assisted to win Canada, contributed towards losing the American colonies. He united with his sovereign to destroy the party system; and the disastrous events of the years, which elapsed between the fall of Rockingham and the fall of North, were to show that Newcastle was right and Pitt was wrong.

APPENDIX I.

WILLIAM PITT AND HIS LATEST BIOGRAPHER.

ALL students of the eighteenth century owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr von Ruville for his masterly biography of one of the greatest figures of that period; but we feel sure that the learned author would be the last to ask that we should accept his conclusions without examination or criticism. It is impossible to dispute Dr von Ruville's impartiality or freedom from prejudice; but it is open to question whether some of the theories he propounds do not rest on too slender a basis of fact. His judgment of Pitt's character does not err on the side of generosity, and it is somewhat startling to English readers to find that statesman depicted as a vulgar fortune-hunter. Few great men have had more glaring defects and more obvious failings; but, until the appearance of Dr von Ruville's work, it was always believed that Pitt, whatever his faults, was never influenced by sordid motives or the desire for money. As is well known, he received at different times valuable legacies from the Duchess of Marlborough and Sir William Pynsent; but it has been reserved for his most recent biographer to discover a sinister interest attaching to these bequests. Divesting these gifts of their apparent innocence, he reveals them as the price paid to Pitt for acting against his convictions; and with the ruthlessness of the scientific historian, sacrifices the honour of his hero in order to establish his

wisdom. The charge cannot be passed by without examination. If the accusation can be proved, Pitt's reputation for integrity is destroyed. He stands no higher than his contemporaries, and indeed lower, for they at least did not conceal their vices under the cloak of disinterested ambition.

By the will of the Duchess of Marlborough, who died in October, 1744, Pitt inherited ten thousand pounds, and, in addition received reversionary rights of great value. The generosity of the duchess probably had its spring in her hatred of Walpole. That minister had wronged her in the days of his power, and she was glad to reward the man who had dared to oppose him, and had suffered for his temerity. As she had made no secret of her intentions, the legacy did not come as a surprise either to Pitt or to the world¹. The fact that the duchess had allowed her benevolent designs to be known before her death is not unimportant, inasmuch as it rendered it possible for Pitt's policy to be influenced by the prospect of a substantial legacy. Such an influence, however, must be carefully discriminated from the effect produced upon Pitt by his accession of wealth after the duchess' death. In the one case he would be dependent upon the whim of a tyrannical and aged woman: in the other he would be more completely his own master than ever before in his career.

It will be convenient to consider first the attitude adopted by Pitt after the death of the duchess. Until this time a comparatively poor man, he had inherited, if not a fortune, at least a substantial sum of money, and might be expected to adopt a more independent line of action than hitherto. If at this period he is found to have changed his opinion in any important particular,

¹ *Grenville Papers*, i. 32.

an obvious case for inquiry exists; but the investigator would do well to bear in mind the deceitfulness of the maxim—post hoc, ergo propter hoc. It seems that a few weeks before the death of his benefactress, Pitt had taken part in negotiations with the Pelhams whom he had consented to join without making any conditions as to measures. After the death of the duchess, however, he changed his opinion, and refused to contemplate the possibility of an union with the Pelhams whom he denounced as worthless and useless. It would be easy, as Bolingbroke did¹, to conclude at once that with his increase in wealth Pitt had lost all desire to take office, but such a conclusion would certainly not be beyond all dispute. It is well to remember that Pitt was the least consistent of politicians, and the most prone to take offence; and if we attribute his unwillingness to take office solely to the legacy, we may be assigning a single cause to an event which, as a matter of fact, had several. Yet, even if we allow that Bolingbroke was right in his surmise, Pitt's admirers have no need to blush for him. Enriched by the benevolence of the Duchess of Marlborough, he could now afford to take a more independent line, and stand out for better terms; but this cannot be taken to prove that, when Pitt consented to a union with the Pelhams, he was acting against his convictions. Politicians, like other men, are often not free agents, and have to put up with what they can get, rather than continue a struggle for the unobtainable; and the greatest infamy that can be urged against Pitt is that he took full advantage of the independence conferred upon him by an admirer's kindness. If this be counted a disgrace, the honour of many statesmen will be in peril.

¹ *Marchmont Papers*, i. 70—75.

Whether Pitt was influenced or not by his increased financial independence may remain a point in dispute, but it is far more serious when he is accused by Dr von Ruville of having deliberately framed his policy so as to ensure receiving the legacy. This is to reduce the greatest statesman of his age to the rank of those needy adventurers who are willing, for the sake of gain, to sacrifice everything except their own advantage, and everybody except themselves. If the accusation can be proved, then Horace Walpole was right when he cynically remarked that countries were usually saved by the worst men in them. There is, however, ground for believing the cruel charge to be baseless; and the particular actions of Pitt, which appear so suspicious to his biographer, are capable of a more innocent interpretation.

Dr von Ruville has great difficulty in understanding the animus with which Pitt pursued Walpole after the latter's fall from power; and suggests that when he called for the punishment of the man who had betrayed and corrupted England, he was thinking more of the Duchess of Marlborough than of the welfare and honour of the country. It may be questioned, however, whether the difficulty involved in Pitt's conduct in this crisis exists anywhere but in his biographer's imagination. Fierce and bitter as was the attack on Walpole, personal in its tone and vindictive in its arguments, it must be admitted that it was eminently characteristic. The man who could insult his brother-in-law in the house of commons, and wield all the thunder of his eloquence against the Duke of Newcastle, was not likely to spare the minister who appeared to him to have betrayed the country. Few statesmen have been more the victim of unreasoning prejudice, and to Pitt, Walpole was the

enemy not only to be overthrown but to be destroyed. If Pitt had been moderate and restrained, if he had practised a machiavellian cunning, and concealed his hostility under the cloak of friendship, some explanation might have been necessary, but that he should be unfair, vindictive, personal, and violent, presents no difficulty. It did not need the stimulus of a promised inheritance to induce him to pour out the vials of his wrath upon a man whom he thought had acted wrongly.

The attack on Walpole is, however, the minor count in Dr von Ruville's charge against Pitt; and the more important instance of the latter's supposed duplicity must now be examined. In the summer of 1744, the Pelhams, desirous of compelling the king to dismiss Carteret, negotiated with the opposition. They found their enemies divided in opinion. Lord Cobham refused to lend his assistance to the ministers, except on specific conditions, whereas Pitt and Chesterfield were in favour of an unconditional union with the administration. In this incident Dr von Ruville again detects the mark of the cloven hoof. In opposition Pitt had been foremost in calling for that measure of reform which would put an end to the prevailing system of corruption; and yet, at the critical moment, we find him abandoning his professions, and willing to unite with the Pelhams without even stipulating for a place bill. If we follow Dr von Ruville, we must at once attribute this inconsistency to the legacy which was being dangled before him. But difficult as it may be to account for the change of front, it is more difficult to attribute it to a desire to please the Duchess of Marlborough. Henry Pelham and his brother were under the protection of the Earl of Orford, and were therefore not likely to be pleasing to the latter's deadly enemy. Dr von Ruville perceives this obstacle in his

path, and attempts to overcome it by explaining that inasmuch as Chesterfield, who had much influence with the duchess, had consented to unite with the Pelhams, Pitt was obliged to follow suit. This argument, ingenious as it is, does not carry conviction. Because Chesterfield had committed himself to a policy which might reasonably be a cause of offence to the duchess, it is not apparent why Pitt should have done the same, and though one may deplore his readiness to sanction a system of government which he had so justifiably attacked, it is unnecessary to attribute his conduct to the meanest motive.

If there is little evidence to prove that the Duchess of Marlborough had in any way bought Pitt, there is less to show that his policy, at a later stage of his career, was at all influenced by the prospect of the Pynsent inheritance. Sir William Pynsent, a west-country baronet of eccentric tastes, was a stout whig and an eager opponent of the Peace of Paris. On his death in January, 1765, it was discovered that he had left the bulk of his fortune to Pitt. With an ingenuity, which dispenses with any proof, Dr von Ruville argues that the animosity displayed by Pitt against the Peace of Paris, and those who assisted to make it, can only be explained by a desire to please Sir William Pynsent, and acquire the valuable inheritance. One serious objection at least must be overcome before this theory can be accepted. There is absolutely nothing to show that Pitt was aware of Pynsent's design. He was not acquainted with him, and it is difficult to treat with becoming seriousness the argument that Pitt must have known of the legacy, because "Sir William scheint aus seinem herzen durchaus keine Mördergrube gemacht zu haben. Sein offenbar cholerisches Temperament liess das kaum zu." In reply to this

contention it might be urged with some force that, if Pynsent was likely to reveal his intentions to Pitt, he was equally likely to reveal it to others; and yet, when the news of the legacy was published, the world, as well as the legatee, was surprised.

This, however, is not the only line of argument employed by Dr von Ruville. He endeavours to drive us between the horns of a cruel dilemma. He argues that unless we are willing to accept his suggestion that Pitt's opposition to the Peace of Paris was influenced by sordid and unworthy motives, we are left without any adequate explanation of his conduct. This is only another way of saying that we must convict Pitt of either baseness or madness. The dilemma, however, is of Dr von Ruville's own creation. Doubtless it would be very difficult to explain or justify Pitt's opposition to the Peace of Paris, if that treaty was, as Dr von Ruville describes it, the most glorious ever concluded by England. Such an estimate may well be considered extravagant, even by those who consider the peace to have been unfairly censured. Glorious, inasmuch as it ended a most successful war, and added wide dominions to the British Empire, the attack upon the treaty was not due simply to the spirit of party and factions opposition. Pitt may have gone further than many of his contemporaries, but he was not alone in thinking that a great opportunity had been lost by faulty diplomacy and undue precipitation. This, surely, would be enough to account for his hostility. Statesman enough to see that the peace, having been made, must be maintained, he could not forgive those who had helped to bring it about; and until Dr von Ruville produces further evidence, he must excuse us from believing that Pitt was the hired bully of Sir William Pynsent.

It is always easier to make charges against character than to refute them; but there is a sound principle in English law which attributes innocence until guilt is proved. And Pitt has every right to claim the protection afforded by this canon of justice. The verdict of history is in substantial agreement with the opinion of contemporaries. Pitt had many enemies who were willing to accuse him of much, but they never charged him with being base; and, if permitted to hear the judgment passed upon him by Dr von Ruville, he might appeal to his career as a whole in refutation of the charge.

APPENDIX II.

THE ELECTION OF A HIGH STEWARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE IN THE YEAR 1764.

THE internal affairs of an university, though always of immediate and absorbing interest to those intimately concerned with them, do not often attract the attention of statesmen and men of the world. The academic politician is generally condemned to play his part upon a narrow stage and before a scanty audience. Preoccupied with issues, the importance of which escapes the perception of the ordinary man, he is unable to win a name amongst those who move in a different environment to himself; and both his skill in securing victory, and his fortitude in enduring defeat, are rarely appreciated beyond the confines of his university. This is not, however, always the case. It sometimes happens that an academic contest arouses enthusiasm in the non-academic mind; and those who have conquered and been vanquished in obscurity, are for once allowed to display their prowess to the world at large. Such an opportunity came in the year, 1764, when the office of high steward of the university of Cambridge fell vacant through the death of the first Earl of Hardwicke. For the space of a few weeks, Cambridge became a centre of attraction to many who, though not enamoured of learning or its devotees, were anxious to strike a blow at their political opponents.

The two candidates for the vacant post were the

new Lord Hardwicke and the Earl of Sandwich. The former might justly aspire to high office in a learned society. Possessed of studious tastes, and unblown upon by the breath of scandal, he formed a striking contrast to his rival, the Earl of Sandwich, who was justly considered one of the most abandoned and profligate characters of the period. It is difficult to imagine a vice which would not have attracted him, or an infamy which he would not have perpetrated. As licentious as Wilkes, he lacked the latter's many redeeming qualities; and when that sordid champion of freedom was denounced by Sandwich in the house of lords, the world was more amused than astonished. Fearing neither God nor man, he pursued with undiminished vigour his vicious pleasures, until death put an end to his debauchery. He lived in an age which was by no means squeamish, but few men have been more mercilessly pilloried by their contemporaries for the excesses of their private life. Gray in *The Cambridge Courtship*, and Churchill in *The Candidate*, drew pictures which, even if only partly true, would suffice to stamp Sandwich as a monstrous libertine; and their testimony, though doubtless inspired by political hostility, is too well supported from other sources to be lightly disregarded.

If Lord Hardwicke, however, could assert a superiority in morality to his rival, the latter was far more experienced in public life. During part of the reign of George II, Sandwich had been first lord of the admiralty, and had assisted in settling the preliminaries of peace at Aix-la-Chapelle. In September, 1763, he had become secretary of state in Grenville's ministry; and it was, therefore, as no unknown man that he appeared before the university of Cambridge. He was able to match his political experience against the secluded life and

studious habits of the second Lord Hardwicke; and if the latter could claim to be more in sympathy with the academic mind, Sandwich could point to his reputation as an industrious and not inefficient administrator.

It is not likely, however, that the competition between these two men for the office of high steward would have awakened much enthusiasm, save in the university itself, if it had not been that one was secretary of state, and the other the son of one of the leaders of the whig opposition. It was the candidates, rather than the office which they sought, that aroused men's interest. If Sandwich succeeded in being elected high steward, the king and his ministers would gain a notable triumph in a university which, with Newcastle as chancellor, had always been regarded as a stronghold of the opposition. It was this consideration which induced the whigs to neglect the parliamentary warfare, and concentrate their attention upon the contest at Cambridge. They believed it to be their duty to repel the ministerial intruder, and to strike a resounding blow at the prestige of the king's administration. It was inevitable that Newcastle should play an active part in such a struggle. He was prepared to strain every nerve to achieve victory for the son of his old friend, and for the party whose destinies he guided; and, doubtless, conscientiously thought that, in so doing, he was serving the country as faithfully as if he had been engaged in supervising the parliamentary combat. He knew that he was fighting the same enemy at Cambridge as he had fought at Westminster; and could salve his conscience with the reflection that it was his opponents who had chosen the new ground for the encounter.

It was of vital importance that no time should be lost. The old Lord Hardwicke died on March 6th, but his life

had been despaired of many days before the end came, and canvassing had begun before his death. Lord Royston¹ might well feel reluctant to appear too eager to succeed his father in his various dignities, but his rival had less reason for delicacy, and was not likely to refrain from action for fear of committing a breach of good taste. The secretary of state was the first in the field². No sooner was Lord Hardwicke dead than Sandwich's supporters began to arrive in Cambridge³; and, by wasting no time, he was apparently more successful than his antagonist in enlisting the sympathy of the non-resident members of the university. Speedy action on the part of the whigs was necessary if the battle was not to be lost at the outset; and in response to a hint from Newcastle, Charles Townshend left London for Cambridge on March 8th⁴. It is true that he could be ill spared from the house of commons, where he might have rendered invaluable service in contesting Grenville's budget; but, always ready for a new excitement, it is likely that he was by no means unwilling to embark upon an enterprise which possessed the attraction of novelty.

In fairness to Townshend, however, it should be said that he faithfully discharged the duties imposed upon him, throwing himself with ardour into the new field of operations, and labouring assiduously to win votes for Hardwicke. He was soon able to report satisfactory progress⁵, and Newcastle had good reason to be satisfied

¹ The title borne by the eldest son of Lord Hardwicke.

² In a pamphlet entitled "An Address to the Members of the Senate" (1764) reference is made to "the indecent use made of a lingering illness previous to the death of our late most worthy high steward."

³ Add. MS. 32957, f. 123.

⁴ Add. MS. 32956, f. 248, f. 254.

⁵ Add. MS. 32956, f. 310.

with the exertion of his nephew. About the middle of March, his place was taken by Thomas Townshend, and Charles departed from the university, to return again before the end of the month¹. "The coming of the two Mr Townshends," wrote the master of St John's, "has had a good effect, and done great service to your cause²."

Successful they may have been, but the methods employed, though typical of the men and the period, would not commend themselves to university politicians at the present day. To a certain Mr Hill of St John's, Newcastle wrote, "Though I have not the honour to be personally known to you, as I had the pleasure to contribute to your obtaining the degree of master of arts in our university, I take the liberty to ask the favor (*sic*) of you to give that vote to the present Earl of Hardwicke³." It was arranged that Mr Mease, fellow of St John's, and curate at Halesworth in Suffolk, should be approached by Sir Joshua Vanneck from whom he had hopes of advancement in the church⁴. Mr Fogarve, of the same college, undertook to give his vote for Lord Sandwich in return for a Whitehall preachiership; but he was wise in his generation, and discreetly refused to be content with civil promises⁵. Mr Carr, a member of the caput, had obtained a valuable living through the influence of Lord Rockingham and the Archbishop of York; and his indebtedness to these two magnates was not forgotten by those working in Hardwicke's interests⁶. Mr Barton was to be compelled to vote for Hardwicke because his mother was pensioned by Lady Gainsborough⁷; and Mr Bennet was "much embarrassed" when a certain name was

¹ Add. MS. 32956, f. 414; Add. MS. 32957, f. 310.

² Add. MS. 32957, f. 34.

³ Add. MS. 32956, f. 316.

⁴ Add. MS. 32956, f. 393.

⁵ Add. MS. 32957, f. 123.

⁶ Add. MS. 32957, f. 153.

⁷ Add. MS. 32957, f. 165.

mentioned to him¹. Thus any weapon of intimidation or persuasion which came to hand was used; and Thomas Townshend waxed indignant at the idea that the Bishop of Exeter might not be able to prevent his chaplain from voting at the election².

In a letter to the Duke of Newcastle, Charles Townshend gave an interesting account of his labours. "Our friend, the Bishop of Lincoln," he wrote, "arrived in the afternoon, and we instantly canvassed his college, and called together upon one or two gentlemen of St John's, Lincolnshire gentlemen whom I thought open to explicit solicitation, and likely to be influenced by the visit, civility, and kind assurances of their own bishop, in opposition to the loose though positive promises of our liberal adversary. Fogarve of St John's was one whom I have good hopes we shall get, but Gunning is more reserved, and I wish the Bishop of Ely may not have wrote too slightly to him. He should both repeat and enforce the application, for Gunning is not engaged. Dr Powell will try him again this day. Mr Browne, minor canon of Rochester, waits Lord Ravensworth's directions, and will be with us upon that application. I think I have made an impression upon Dr Collignon who stands, even in the present list, marked against us.... Pemberton of Peterhouse declared to me yesterday after long expostulation. He is a pretty young man. I have this morning gained ground with Ewin, and I will venture to say he will go with us....Longmire of Peterhouse is shy, but the master thinks him sure. He is the more material as he is a proctor, his colleague against us, and the manner of taking the votes exceptionable, and too open to all sorts of inaccuracy³."

¹ Add. MS. 32957, f. 149.

² Add. MS. 32957, f. 149.

³ Add. MS. 32956, f. 357.

Thus the game was played; and men, accustomed to lead quiet secluded lives, suddenly found themselves cajoled and threatened by eager politicians and great nobles. Much had undoubtedly been done to improve Hardwicke's prospects; but Sandwich still retained an advantage in respect of the non-resident voters, and might succeed in carrying the day by their aid. The whigs were ready enough to bring up their supporters from London and elsewhere, but time was fighting against them. The election had been fixed for March 22nd, and the day was close at hand. It was in vain that Newcastle petitioned for "a delay of a week: the vice-chancellor, though in sympathy with Hardwicke, refused to comply with the demand¹. It is probable that no alteration would have been made, had it not been for the indiscreet action of certain of Sandwich's followers. In their anxiety to thwart their opponents as much as possible, they over-reached themselves, and contrived to furnish the vice-chancellor with an excuse for postponing the day of the election.

As at present, masters of arts, who removed their names from the register of the university, lost the right of voting in the senate, but it was possible for them, by replacing their names, to recover the privilege. To obviate abuses, which might possibly arise in connection with this practice, it was expressly provided that an interval of three months must elapse, after the date of re-admission, before the right of voting could be exercised². It had, apparently, never been definitely decided whether these three months were to be reckoned by the moon or by the calendar; and, taking advantage of this ambiguity, Dr Smith, master of Trinity, and an ardent

¹ Add. MS. 32956, f. 314, f. 369.

² A longer interval, namely 180 days, is now demanded.

supporter of Sandwich, presented a memorial to the vice-chancellor, in which he contended that "no person re-admitted after December 22nd had the right of voting in the senate on March 22nd," inasmuch as "the space of time from December 22nd to March 22nd, being equal to the months of December, January, and February added together, or of January, February, and March added together, contains three calendar months¹."

If Dr Smith was right in his contention, Lord Hardwicke's followers had been guilty of a miscalculation which might have serious consequences. Reckoning the three months, required by statute, according to the moon, they had counted upon using the votes of all their friends re-admitted before December 30th. Between the latter date and December 22nd there had been twenty-two re-admissions, thirteen of whom were supporters of Hardwicke, and nine followers of Sandwich². Thus the point raised by the master of Trinity was of something more than academic interest. If his interpretation of the statute was upheld, Hardwicke would be the loser; and if the question was left unsettled, the validity of twenty-two votes would be open to dispute. It was of material advantage to the whigs, at this crisis of their fortunes, that they numbered the vice-chancellor amongst their friends. Throwing his scruples to the winds, he frankly acted as a partisan; and, on the advice of Hardwicke's party, postponed the election to March 30th³. By this he did more than cut the ground from under the feet of the master of Trinity; he gave Newcastle and his friends time to win votes amongst the non-resident

¹ Add. MS. 32957, f. 61.

² Add. MS. 32956, f. 260. No mark is attached to the name of George Onslow, but it seems fair to include him amongst the supporters of Hardwicke.

³ Add. MS. 32957, f. 57, f. 95.

members of the senate. It is not surprising that Sandwich was deeply chagrined by such conduct. He had everything to lose, and nothing to gain, by delay ; and displayed his vexation by threatening the vice-chancellor with legal proceedings¹.

It would be easy, however, to exaggerate the importance of this incident. Sandwich had suffered a rebuff, but he still remained a very formidable antagonist. Neither party could look forward to a triumphant issue with any degree of certainty. University opinion was closely divided on the merits of the rival candidates ; and it was clear that, whoever carried the day, would only do so by a narrow majority². Moreover the existing constitution of the university increased the difficulty of a reliable forecast. The high steward was appointed by a grace which had first to be passed by the caput, a small body consisting of the vice-chancellor and five other members. The powers of this assembly were by no means inconsiderable, inasmuch as any individual member of it had the right of absolute veto³. If passed by the caput, the grace would be submitted to the senate which was divided into two houses, known as the regents and non-regents. All masters of arts for the first five years after taking their degree were regents, after which time they became non-regents. The consent of each house was necessary to the passing of a grace ; and this pro-

¹ Add. MS. 32957, f. 137.

² The majority of heads of houses were supporters of Hardwicke ; and of the colleges, while Trinity, King's, Pembroke, Caius, and St Catharine's were strongholds of the Sandwich party, Queens', Corpus, Clare, and Peterhouse were mainly in Hardwicke's interest. Add. MS. 32957, f. 5, f. 53, f. 205 ; Add. MS. 32958, f. 60, f. 68, f. 70, f. 72, f. 74, f. 76, f. 80, f. 82.

³ Wordsworth's *Social Life at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 38, 39.

vision enabled the junior members of the university often to offer effective opposition to their seniors. A doctor enjoyed the privilege of voting in either house, except for the first two years after taking his doctor's degree, during which period he was a member of the regents' house¹.

Those working in Lord Hardwicke's interests were prolific in producing statements purporting to show the numerical strength of the two parties²; but the value of these accounts is very much open to question. All prophecies, as to the probable result, were vitiated by the element of uncertainty which it was impossible to eliminate. A certain proportion of the voters preserved a discreet silence, refusing to commit themselves definitely to either party; and these were the men who, by declaring themselves at the last moment, might turn the balance in one direction or the other. It was, moreover, extremely difficult to foretell the number of non-residents who would vote on the day of the election; and the unexpected arrival of Castley from the Isle of Man caused the master of Jesus to have the most gloomy forebodings³. Nothing was beyond doubt, save that it would be a close encounter and a fight to the finish.

If a certain number of the senior members of the university were reticent in expressing their opinions, their example was not followed by the undergraduates who displayed a lively interest in the struggle which was going on in their midst. Without a vote in the senate, they were unable to influence the course of events, but

¹ "You know," wrote Lord Sandwich in 1764, "there are many doctors who are only regents" (Add. MS. 32957, f. 184). Dr Warren described himself as a member of the regents' house "as two years are not quite elapsed since I was admitted doctor" (Add. MS. 32957, f. 31).

² Add. MS. 32956, f. 271, f. 321, f. 442; Add. MS. 32957, f. 1, f. 83, f. 111, f. 165, f. 276.

³ Add. MS. 32957, f. 165.

were willing enough to seize an opportunity for riot and disorder. They were, for the most part, warmly in favour of Lord Hardwicke, and showed little mercy to the most eminent supporters of his rival. On the night of March 15th there was a riot in King's, the undergraduates gathering round the provost's lodge, and raising the cry "Bring out your daughters, Jemmy Twitcher is come¹." The scholars and pensioners of Trinity were bitterly opposed to their master for his support of Lord Sandwich; and there was a reasonable fear that a serious riot might break out on the day of the election. Constables were planted in the streets leading to the senate house, and every precaution taken; for, as an observer informed Newcastle, "the spirit of the young men on this occasion...was very remarkable, so that there was just reason to fear that they might proceed to extremities against some particular persons²."

Whatever disturbance there was, however, occurred inside and not outside the senate house. The grace for the appointment of Lord Hardwicke as high steward having been safely steered through the caput, was submitted to the senate on March 30th. It passed the non-regents' house by a narrow majority of two; but when the votes of the regents were added up, it was discovered that the two proctors disagreed. Longmire, the senior proctor, counted 108 placets for the grace and 107 non-placets, but this order was exactly reversed by Foster, the junior proctor, according to whose reckoning the grace was non-placeted by one vote. The confusion appears to have arisen through a blunder by Foster. When everyone had voted except Longmire, an equal number of placets and non-placets, namely 107, stood recorded on each proctor's list. Longmire then voted

¹ Add. MS. 32957, f. 193.

² Add. MS. 32957, f. 396.

placet and recorded his vote on his list; but, either by accident or design, he was marked by Foster as having non-placeted the grace.

The conflicting lists were presented by the esquire bedell to the vice-chancellor who at once commanded the two proctors to appear before him. In the meantime Longmire and Foster had altered their lists, so as to make it appear that an equal number of placets and non-placets had been given¹. Addressing them from the chair, the vice-chancellor inquired whether they could declare the grace approved or rejected, instructing them, if they found themselves unable to give a definite answer, to hold a second scrutiny. At once three doctors, supporters of Sandwich, arose, and loudly called upon the junior proctor to answer no questions, to refuse a second scrutiny, and to adhere to his declaration that the number of votes was equal. A scene of general confusion followed, in the midst of which was heard a hammering on the door of the senate house. The provost of King's called the attention of the vice-chancellor to the noise, and declared it to come from the master of Trinity seeking admission. Fearing perhaps that he might be insulted and misused by the undergraduates of his college², Dr Smith had refrained from appearing in the senate house, much to the annoyance of his allies who, when they heard the knocking, concluded that he had repented at the eleventh hour. If their surmise was correct, he had chosen his time well: his vote in a second scrutiny might decide the question in favour of Sandwich.

This point was quickly seen by the members of the

¹ This was an arithmetical impossibility, inasmuch as it was never denied that the number of placets and non-placets given by the regents amounted in all to 215.

² Add. MS. 32957, f. 396.

senate. The provost of King's demanded that the master of Trinity should be admitted, and was opposed by the master of Magdalene who argued, with some force, that "the mistake, which was made amongst the numbers then present, was not to be rectified by the admittance of a new vote¹." Either convinced by this argument, or influenced by his sympathy with Hardwicke, the vice-chancellor ordered that the doors should not be opened; but no sooner had the decree gone forth, than the futility of the discussion was revealed. It was discovered that the knocking proceeded from a messenger who had come to say that the master of Trinity would do anything for Lord Sandwich, except imperil his life for him.

This incident was but an interlude in a day of confusion and anarchy. When it was understood that Dr Smith did not seek admission, the discussion reverted to the question of the second scrutiny. The master of Trinity Hall argued that constitutional practice demanded a second scrutiny, and the vice-chancellor was of the same opinion. What followed may be best described in the words of a contemporary. "Silence was ordered. Mr Bennet, notary public, was summoned to attend that he might take notice what questions were asked, and of the replys (*sic*). The question put to the senior proctor was, 'Will you declare placet or non-placet?' 'No, I cannot.' 'Will you proceed to a second scrutiny?' 'Yes, with all my heart.' The like questions were put to the junior proctor who answered to the first as the senior proctor had done; to the other, that he would go to no second scrutiny. Then the vice-chancellor gave him a monition so to do; which he refusing to obey, the vice-chancellor dissolved the congregation²."

¹ Add. MS. 32957, f. 394.

² Add. MS. 32957, f. 394, see also f. 310, f. 312.

This was but a barren result for the hard work which had preceded the election. Both parties had cause for dissatisfaction, for it still remained open to question which of the two candidates, if either, had been elected. When first approached for his opinion, Charles Yorke argued that the dissolution of the congregation, before any declaration had been made, annulled all the proceedings, and that nothing remained but to hold a second election¹. Newcastle, however, was bitterly opposed to such a course of action, and it is not likely that Sandwich was prepared to begin the struggle all over again. But, if a second election was out of the question, no alternative remained but an appeal to the courts of law. This might appear to be an equally hazardous enterprise, but Lord Hardwicke and his followers were encouraged to hope for a successful issue by a lucky discovery made by the Bishop of Norwich. Apparently a certain Mr Pitt, who had given his vote in the regents' house against Lord Hardwicke, had done so illegally, being a non-regent. He had taken his degree as master of arts on July 18th, 1758, "from which day," wrote the Bishop of Norwich, "his regency takes its reckoning, not from the subsequent commencement 1759. Persons who go out by mandate, as he did, are created immediately, and their creation makes their commencement as the Bishop of Lincoln can inform your grace²."

The case was brought before the court of king's bench in the spring of 1765, and decided in Hardwicke's favour, Pitt's vote being disallowed. Thus ended the contest which had continued for more than a year, and which may be said to have profited neither party. The triumph of Hardwicke was too belated to be of substantial advantage to the whig opposition, and Sandwich had gained

¹ Add. MS. 32957, f. 466.

² Add. MS. 32958, f. 23.

nothing by his incursion into unfamiliar territory. By the time that the matter was submitted to the court of king's bench, a good deal of the interest had evaporated; but when the contest was at its height, feeling had run high in the university. The calm of academic life was rudely broken, men's passions were aroused by the mimic warfare; and one of the greatest of the Cambridge colleges was the scene of a struggle which, being the outcome of the greater contest, may not unfittingly be related here.

On April 5th, 1764, Lord Sandwich arrived in Cambridge from Hinchbrook, and was invited to dine in the hall of Trinity on the following day. The passions, aroused by the events of the previous weeks, had by no means yet subsided; and it is significant that the master of Trinity took the precaution of inquiring of the fellows of the college whether they intended "to entertain his lordship genteelly¹." It may be surmised that he was satisfied with the answer they gave; but he would have been wiser to secure the good behaviour of the junior members of the college. The scholars and pensioners, ardent partisans of Hardwicke to a man, determined to signify their disapproval of the action of their elders, and on the day that Lord Sandwich was a guest at the high table, only one undergraduate condescended to dine in hall². No more effective demonstration of hostility could have been devised. The long empty benches told their own tale; and the presence of a single undergraduate served to point the absence of the rest.

It would doubtless have been wiser to pass by such conduct in silence, but the master considered, and with some justice, that a gross insult had been inflicted upon his guest and himself. He determined upon the punish-

¹ Add. MS. 32958, f. 7.

² Add. MS. 32958, f. 15, f. 21.

ment of the offenders, and the course he pursued can be best gathered from a letter written by the Rev. James Backhouse¹, a fellow of the college, to the Duke of Newcastle. "The kind concern," wrote Backhouse, "your lordship was pleased to express for the difficulties we have now to struggle with in Trinity college, induces me to trouble you with a sketch of our proceedings since my last. On Friday last, when Davis, Meredith, and Newbon (our friends in the present cause) were out of college, the master, having previously converted Powell and Place, summoned the seniors to confirm the sentence he had drawn up for the undergraduates, which, at last, after a sort he effected. But when the sentence came to be put into execution, only four of the whole number of lads could be prevailed upon to sign the admonition. What the consequences of this will be I know not; but the great man declares that no vacant scholarship shall be filled up this year, and the young men, fearing the worst, are many of them looking out for a refuge elsewhere. Mr Brockett was of the seniority, and, I need scarce tell your lordship, most violent in his counsels. The next day he declared in a public coffee house that now the sword was drawn in Trinity college, it should never be sheathed whilst there was one left standing in the field. To give your lordship a specimen of the master's behaviour at the meeting, I mention the following circumstance, viz.—when he was pressed to a non plus about the true sense and meaning of a clause in the statute, *de pona (sic) majorum criminum*², he commanded

¹ For an account of Backhouse, see Gunning's *Reminiscences of Cambridge*, II. 113, 114.

² The statute ran as follows: "Nihil est quod magis homines ad delinquendum incitet, quam impunitas; et propterea statuimus et ordinamus, ut si quis Sociorum aut Discipulorum, aliorumve intra

me in a magisterial strain to be silent, alledging (*sic*) this reason for it, that the interpretation of the statutes belonged to the master alone, and the seniors had nothing to do with it¹."

Thus one of the consequences of the contest for the office of high steward was open war in Trinity. The master was in opposition to a certain section of the fellows, and to nearly all the undergraduates. By dint of something like chicanery², he had obtained the consent of the seniority to a high-handed measure of authority. The document, which the undergraduates were called upon to sign, ran as follows: "It being notorious that not one of the scholars of the house, and but one of the

collegium vitam degentium, haereseos, aut probabilis suspicionis haereseos aut simoniae, aut impiae et perversae, alicujus opinionis aut dogmatis, aut laesae majestatis, aut pertinaciae, aut perjurii, furti notabilis, homicidii voluntarii, stupri, adulterii, incestus, raptionis injuriosae, ac violentae percussione Socii cujusquam, aut Discipuli, aut Pensionarii, aut Sisatoris, aut Subsisatoris, convictus fit, aut vulnus grave cuiquam ex praedictis inflexerit, aut si magistrum ejusve vicarium aut officarium, octove Seniorum quempiam, vel leviter percusserit; quinetiam si portas collegii furtim reseraverit, aut conjurationes vel insidias contra Collegium comparaverit, vel seditiones in collegio aliquando excitaverit, aut damnum grave ei intulerit, aut per alios haec fieri aliquando procuraverit, aut dedecus infamiamve Collegio inusserit, aut coram Magistro, ejusve Vicario, et octo Senioribus se vel haec omnia praedicta crimina, vel singula eorum admisisse confessus fuerit, aut eorumdem idoneis testibus convictus, Magistri et majoris partis octo Seniorum consensu, sine ulla monitione collegio omnino privetur.

Minorum autem criminum poena, de qua in Statutis nulla fit mentio, judicio Magistri, aut ejus Vicarii et octo Seniorum, semper relinquatur."

¹ Add. MS. 32958, f. 382.

² "The four seniors who concurred with the master (whose concurrence made a majority) were Dr Walker, Mr Powell, Mr Place, Mr Brockett. The master availed himself of the absence of Dr Davis and Mr Newbon: for, by their going out of college, Place and Brockett came into the number of the eight resident seniors." Add. MS. 32958, f. 429.

pensioners, did appear in the college hall on Friday, the 6th April last, when by invitation from the master and seniors, the Earl of Sandwich, Lord Townshend, and Lord Carysfort were entertained there: We, whose names are underwritten, do confess, that being then in commons we did knowingly and wilfully conspire to be absent from the hall, as above mentioned, in open contempt and defiance of all decency, discipline, and government: and having thus debased ourselves, and dishonoured the college by branding it with disgrace and infamy, we confess we have incurred the penalty of expulsion by the 38th statute, *De poena majorum criminum et minorum*; and do receive from our governours (*sic*) this admonition in order to expulsion, instead of expulsion itself, which we have justly deserved¹."

Only four undergraduates, all of them pensioners, were at first found willing to admit their fault, and sign the confession imposed upon them. The remainder, encouraged by their number, and by the support they received², raised the flag of rebellion, and preferred to run the risk of expulsion rather than allow that they had acted wrongly. Yet, resolute as they were, they found an equal determination in the master and those of the seniors who were in sympathy with him. An end would be put to discipline if authority could be flouted with impunity; and the time was not suitable for half-measures. The prophecy, which Mr Brockett had

¹ See Admission Book, Trinity College, Cambridge. A copy of the admonition is to be found amongst the Newcastle Papers, Add. MS. 32958, f. 383.

² "I wish you would consider," wrote Newcastle to Charles Yorke, "whether those meritorious young men of Trinity can have any relief from these acts of oppression in the master. I hear the other colleges are determined to take them in the handsomest manner, if they are expelled their own college" (Add. MS. 32958, f. 476).

delivered in a public coffee house, seemed in the course of fulfilment. The seniority met on the morning of May 14th, and further measures of reprisal were carried. It was decreed that "none of the pensioners, who will not subscribe the admonition to-morrow evening after chapel, shall be permitted to offer himself a candidate for scholarships"; but, as this would only affect a certain section of the undergraduates, it was agreed to leave the punishment of the scholars and other pensioners for future consideration¹.

The penalty thus imposed was undoubtedly very severe. A Trinity scholarship was, and still remains, a much coveted honour; and, by the decision of the seniority, many were precluded from the satisfaction of their legitimate ambition, unless prepared to confess to a fault of which they did not feel themselves guilty. In defence of the action of the master and seniors, it might be argued that the college was justified in refusing to allow those, who had resisted its authority, to compete for its emoluments; but this argument would apply with far less force to the undergraduates who, on the strength of being elected to a Westminster scholarship in the previous year, had already come into residence, but now found themselves denied admission into their scholarships unless they signed the admonition². The legality of such a proceeding was very questionable, and the father of one of the boys concerned threatened to take legal proceedings against the master³.

It is to the credit of the college that an overwhelming

¹ Add. MS. 32958, f. 386.

² "The consequence of this I believe will be," wrote Backhouse, "that the last year's Westminsters will be excluded from their scholarships" (Add. MS. 32958, f. 386).

³ Add. MS. 32959, f. 118.

proportion of the undergraduates refused to be intimidated by the tyrannical threats of the master and seniority. Originally only four signatures had been appended to the admonition, and it was not until a little later that James Carrington, thinking perhaps that, if Paris was worth a mass, a Trinity scholarship was some compensation for humiliation, submitted and signed the document¹. His example was not followed by any of the other rebels; and thus only five, out of the whole number of undergraduates then in residence, were found willing to confess that they had done wrong in refusing to dine in hall on the day that Lord Sandwich honoured the high table by his presence. Confronted with such strenuous resistance, the authorities pursued the wisest course under the circumstances, and abandoned the struggle which ought never to have been begun². In the Admission Book of the college, there is an entry, dated June 23rd, 1764, which states that "in order to restore tranquillity and time for study, the master and seniors have pardoned all the offenders in the case above mentioned, or any way relating to it, even those who refused to sign the admonition"; but it is not without interest, or altogether devoid of significance, that amongst the ten candidates who were awarded scholarships in that year, are to be found the five who had signed the admonition.

Some apology is perhaps needed for dwelling at length upon a topic of very limited interest; and it was by way of an apology that the story was relegated

¹ Add. MS. 32958, f. 386; Admission Book, p. 446.

² On May 26th Newcastle was informed that "it is thought at Cambridge that he (i.e. the master) will not do anything more" (Add. MS. 32959, f. 118); James Backhouse was also of the opinion "that the master is sick of his persecutions" (Add. MS. 32959, f. 150).

to the obscurity of an appendix. No one would contend that the internal affairs of Cambridge or Trinity are of great importance, but it is possible that they may prove of interest to those who, versed in the university politics of the present day, will find in the struggle between Hardwicke and Sandwich both a parallel and a contrast.

APPENDIX III.

Amongst the Newcastle papers in the British museum is an interesting list of the placemen in both houses who voted against the repeal of the stamp act. To the name of each man is appended the office that he held; and the document gives a vivid illustration of the strength of the party of "king's friends," and the power which George III possessed to control the decisions of the house of commons.

ADDITIONAL MSS. 33001, APRIL 26, 1766

PLACEMEN WHO VOTED AGAINST THE REPEAL

Lord Barrington	Secretary at War
Lord Bateman	Master of the Buckhounds
Lord R. Bertie	Lord of the Bedchamber
William Blakiston	Solicitor General to the Queen
Hon. Robert Brudenell	Vice Chamberlain to the Queen
Hon. John Burgoyne	Colonel of the 16th Regiment of Dragoons
Hon. Charles Cadogan	Surveyor of the Gardens
James Campbell	Governor of Stirling Castle
Sir James Douglas	Admiral of the White
Archibald Douglas	Colonel of Dragoons
Jeremiah Dyson	Commissioner of Trade
John Eames	Master in Chancery
Sir G. Elliot	Treasurer of the Chambers
Simon Fanshaw	Comptroller of the Green Cloth
Lord Adam Gordon	Colonel of Foot
Marquis of Granby	Master of the Ordnance

Thomas Gilbert	Comptroller of the Household
David Graeme	Secretary to the Queen
John Hamilton	Master of the King's works in Scotland
William Gerard Hamilton	Chancellor of Exchequer in Ireland
Eliab Harvey	King's Counsel
Edward Harvey	Colonel of Light Horse
Frank Holbourn	Admiral of the Red
Marquis of Lorne	Colonel of Foot
John Ross Mackye	Paymaster of the Ordnance
Alexander Mackay	Colonel of Foot
Lord Robert Manners	Colonel of Dragoons
John Manners	Housekeeper at Whitehall
R. H. Thomas Millar	Lord Advocate
Thomas Moore Molineux	Captain in the 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards
H. Arch Montgomery	Ranger of S. James and Hyde Park
John Morton	Chief Justice of Chester
John Mostyn	Colonel of Dragoons
Edmund Nugent	Groom of Bedchamber
R. H. James Oswald	Vice Treasurer of Ireland
Earl of Panmure	Colonel of Foot
Sir George Pococke	Admiral of the Blue
George Rice	Lord of Trade
John Lockhart Ross	Captain in the Navy
Lord George Sackville	Vice Treasurer of Ireland
Sir John Sebright	Colonel of Foot
Henry Seymour	Groom of the Bedchamber
Lord Charles Spencer	Verdurer of Whichwood Forest
Hans Stanley	Governor of Isle of Wight
Sir Simeon Stuart	Chamberlain of the Exchequer
Lord Strange	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancashire
Thomas Thoroton	Secretary to the Master of the Ordnance
Edward Thurlowe	King's Counsel
Henry Wauchope	Deputy Privy Purse
Lord Warkworth	Aide-de-camp to the King
Alexander Wedderburn	King's Counsel
Thomas Worsley	Surveyor of Board of Works

APRIL 17, 1766

LORDS HAVING PLACES WHO VOTED AGAINST THE REPEAL

Earl of Pembroke	Colonel of Dragoons
Earl of Denbigh	Master of Fox Hounds
Earl of Litchfield	Captain of the Band of Pensioners
Earl of Coventry	Lord of Bedchamber
Earl Ferrers	Captain in the Navy
Earl Waldegrave	Colonel of Dragoons
Earl Orford	Ranger of S. James and Hyde Park
Earl of Buckinghamshire	Lord of the Bedchamber
Earl of Oxford	Lord of the Bedchamber
Earl Harcourt	Lord Chamberlain to the Queen
Earl of Darlington	Master of the Jewel Office
Earl Talbot	Lord Steward
Viscount Townshend	General of the Ordnance
Earl of Sutherland	Aide-de-camp to the King
Earl of Rothes	Colonel of 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards
Earl of Eglintoun	Lord of the Bedchamber
Earl of Loudon	Colonel of Foot
Earl of March	Lord of the Bedchamber
Lord Cathcart	First Commissioner of Police in Scotland

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